

PS 3507
.07323

N4

1915

Copy 1

Original Copyrighted (in England, her Colonies, and
(s) Edition of the Works of the Best Authors

No. 311

THE NEW CO-ED

An Original Comedy in Four Acts

BY

MARIE DORAN

COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY SAMUEL FRENCH

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION.—Amateurs and Professionals are hereby warned that "THE NEW CO-ED," being fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States, is subject to Royalty, and any one presenting the play without the consent of Samuel French will be liable to the penalties by law provided. Application for the right to produce "THE NEW CO-ED," must be made to Samuel French, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York.

PRICE 25 CENTS.

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND



THE NEW CO-ED

An Original Comedy In Four Acts

BY
MARIE DORAN

COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY SAMUEL FRENCH

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION.—Amateurs and Professionals are hereby warned that "THE NEW CO-ED," being fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States, is subject to Royalty, and any one presenting the play without the consent of Samuel French will be liable to the penalties by law provided. Application for the right to produce "THE NEW CO-ED," must be made to Samuel French, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York.

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

PS 3507
O7323N4
1915

THE NEW CO-ED.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

LETITIA (LETTY) WILLIS *A new student, from a small town*
MADGE STEVENS.....LETTY's friend and champion
ESTELLE DOOLITTLE.....*A spoiled beauty*
MISS RICE.....*The landlady*
MAY....}
ROSE... }*College chums*
GRACE.. }
RICHARD (DICK) BRADLEY..*The athletic star of the class*
"PUNCH" DOOLITTLE....*The mischievous, work-hating brother of ESTELLE*
JIM YOUNG..*A neutral, and Coach of the Dramatic Club*
GEORGE WASHINGTON WATTS.....*Porter at Miss Rice's, a gentlemen of color, and "peace"*
Students, members of the Dramatic Club, The Glee Club, etc.

2

©CLD 41949

OCT 11 1915

201

amr 31 may 34

THE NEW CO-ED.

ACT I. Sitting-room in Miss Rice's boarding-house. The arrival of the new student, and her reception.

ACT II. Same scene, on Hallowe'en night.

ACT III. Same scene. A business meeting of the Dramatic Association.

ACT IV. The Campus, or lawn; the class dinner and reception.

The theme of this play is the arrival of a new student at the college, her reception, her trials, and how they terminate.

THE NEW CO-ED.

PROPERTY PLOT.

ACT I. Neat furniture; curtains; piano; cushions. Quantity of unframed photographs. 3 letters with envelopes; 3 checks. Suit-case. Telegram. Several pieces sheet music. 2 vases on mantel. 1 large box of candy—(to be eaten. 1 small fancy candy box—(not opened). Coins.

ACT II. Plenty of Hallowe'en decorations. Scissors; piece of tape; spool cotton; thimble; pitcher of lemonade (to drink); 4 tumblers. Book. Diamond ring in jewel-box, and another box. 1 paste-board box, about the size of show box, containing one very small sandwich. Flask, filled with sarsaparilla (to drink). About 12 large apples. Small photograph of farmhouse. Letter in envelope. 1 large handkerchief for each person (to blindfold). 1 purse and paper money.

ACT III. Writing-paper, or pad; pencil; ballot-box; minute book; small account book. A number of paper covered play books. Gavel. Pitcher of water. College flags.

ACT IV. Rustic or garden furniture—bench and chair. Small jewel-box (not opened). Collar, and red or yellow tie.

Costumes—modern. The Hallowe'en costumes may be as elaborate and grotesque as desired. Letty does not wear such a costume.

THE NEW CO-ED.

ACT I.

SCENE:—*The sitting-room in the boarding-house, conducted by MISS RICE. A neat interior, more comfortable than stylish. C. D. at the back. A door on the L. A door on the R. A mantel-piece and fireplace on the R. below the door. Center-table in the C. of the room. Piano in upper L. corner. An ample couch down-stage R. of C. Comfortable rocking-chair, or arm-chair, on the L. down-stage. Several light chairs—easy to move. The doorway curtained. Any other furnishings available, with two vases or ornaments on the mantel. If the fireplace is not available, the mantel-shelf will answer, and is easily contrived. On the floor in front of C. table, three cushions, two or three feet apart.*

The time is the Autumn, when the students are about to resume study.

AT RISE:—MAY, ROSE and GRACE, three pretty students, are seated on the cushions. They form a nearly straight line, as they sit upright, each with an earnest manner, while each girl holds a letter, which she is reading intently. Each with an envelope lying in her lap, and a check with each envelope.

(Enter from C. D. MADGE STEVENS, in brisk fashion, her arms full of unframed photographs. She is singing, or whistling, as she advances down R. of table.)

MADGE. Ah, ha! here is where I find you—retreaters! quitters! and squatters! (*To the girls*) Didn't you promise to help me unpack, and give me your solemn pledge you would set up the art gallery.

MAY. (*Rather sharply*) Oh, Madge, ring off!

ROSE. (*Same tone*) You always interrupt us—

GRACE. (*Same tone*) When we are reading the morning mail!

(*The three girls bury themselves in the letters.*)

J
MADGE. Mail! (*Spelling*) M-a-i-l—or, is it m-a-l-e. (*Singing*) Three little maids to school come we, but not for study, he-he-he!

GRACE. (*To MADGE*) You make more noise than a mob!

MAY. (*Looking at letter*) You dear father!

MADGE. (*Mimicing MAY*) "You dear father"—oh, I'm wise to your tricks, foxy one!

MAY. (*To MADGE*) I suppose *you* think it is from a boy!

MADGE. (*To ROSE*) And Rosie's letter—is that from "dear father," too?

ROSE. (*Regarding letter*) From my own darling dad——!

MADGE. To complete the conspiracy—what sayeth thou, Grace, the third?

MAY. (*Reading letter*) "My dear daughter—in accordance with your request, I inclose herewith a check for fifty dollars—" (*Picking up check from her lap*) There it is! (*Waving it*)

ROSE. (*Reading letter*) "Dear little Rosie-Posie—it surprised me—though not a great deal—to receive your sweet letter. I enclose what you asked for—a check for seventy-five dollars—" (*Picking up the check*) Hurrah, for my daddy! (*Waving check*)

GRACE. (*Reading*) "Gracie, dear—your mother informs me that you telegraphed for money—find

inclosed my check for one hundred." (*Picking up check*) Oh, you papa, dear! (*Waving check*)

MADGE. You shameless things! back from vacation only three days, and asking fathers for money!

MAY. Three cheers for our dads!

OMNES. (*Heartily*) Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! (*Waving checks*)

MADGE. And a tiger for the grafters! (*Tossing the armful of photographs over the three girls. All laugh heartily*) You're a bunch of human cash-registers!

MAY. (*Picking up two or three photographs*) What are you going to do with this junk?

(*The three girls place their letters and checks in envelopes, and tuck the letters in their belts.*)

MADGE. This is *not* junk, Miss Fresh—each and every pasteboard represents the features of a manly hero! (*Picking up a photograph*) There's Bob Summers, in his uniform, after he won the hundred yard dash! Gaze upon that Greek profile! (*Holding it at length, regarding it*)

ROSE. Covered with freckles!

(*All the girls laugh.*)

GRACE. (*Picking up a photo*) Here's Dude Miller—after he recovered from a joy ride. Look upon those dreamy eyes—that wabbly frame!

(*The girls laugh.*)

ROSE. (*Picking up photo*) Here's Matty Collins—just as he received a stern command from father to pack and come home—because Matty missed every exam! Isn't he a happy looking infant!

MAY. (*Picking up photo*) Let me call your attention to *this* one—the homeliest, freshest, and

onliest-Punch Doolittle—who believes in all play and no work—attired in the usual make-up—one brown stocking, one white, one tennis shoe and one rubber boot—our only Punch! (*Regarding photo*)

MADGE. Oh—spiteful! (*Snatching the photo from MAY*) You're always ridiculing poor Punchy—the very darlingest boy in school—anyway, I think so. (*Dusting the photo with the corner of her dress, and regarding it affectionately*)

OMNES. Oh, we know that, Madgie love!

(*Laughing at MADGE, as the girls gather the photos into piles, while ROSE is much interested in trying to build a bridge with the pictures.*)

MADGE. Who cares if he is reckless of his appearance? So were the greatest men in history! (*Disdainfully*) Brainy people care nothing for boots and stockings——

GRACE. Brainy! That eliminates Punch.

MADGE. (*Airily*) Your ill-natured sarcasm is stricken from the record! (*Admiring photo*) Look at his noble shoulders, his frank, open face!

ROSE. I've heard of an open-face watch—but—

MAY. Who opened Punchy's face?

MADGE. (*Ignoring their remarks*) See! his great, generous ears!

ROSE. They certainly are generous!

MAY. Why, you can see those flaps a mile off—long before the face to which they grow!

MADGE. (*Haughtily, to MAY*) Miss Junior—if you knew anything about organology, you would realize that ears are not attached to faces—they are attached to heads! (*MADGE, with her head in the air, turns to mantel R. and places the photo conspicuously in the C.*)

GRACE. Oh—Madge is all het up—be gum! Want some more, honey? (*Carelessly tossing several photos over to MADGE—who picks them up,*

presently, and arranges on mantel. Contemplating photo) And these are the creatures we once loved!

MAY. Speak for yourself, Gracie. (*Rising*) My soul mate is not in this collection! (*Carrying several photos to MADGE at mantel*)

(*Enter ESTELLE DOOLITTLE c. door.*)

ESTELLE. Hello, chums. (*Down L. of table to L. C.*)

ROSE. (*Seated*) Here's Estelle. (*Continuing to pile up the photos*)

MAY. We were all just wishing you would come in.

GRACE. Madge wants you to help her arrange these relics. (*She rises, picking up her pillow and MAY's, both of which she tosses on the couch R.—then she picks up several photos and thrusts them into ESTELLE's hands*)

ESTELLE. What a bother Madge is! (*Sinking languidly into chair L. of C., allowing the photos to lie in her lap*)

(*MADGE at mantel, arranging photos, which MAY hands her.*)

MADGE. Isn't Ricey a love of a landlady? She knows we will have to pin down to study when school begins next week. She says we may do as we please in this room, so I am going to make it cute and homelike by decorating it.

ESTELLE. With these things? (*Indicating photos*)

MADGE. Surely—human decorations!

GRACE. (*Lounging on couch R.*) Wasn't it Nero who invented human decorations?

ROSE. (*Composedly*) Yes—he spiked Christians in his garden!

MADGE. Oh, horrid—shivery!

ESTELLE. Some of these ought to be spiked.
(*Looking at a photo*)

MADGE. That's not intended for a certain hero—
(*Looking at ESTELLE, as she advances down to back of table, where she picks up a couple of photos*)

GRACE, MAY and ROSE. (*In chorus*) We know who—Dick Bradley! (*All looking at ESTELLE*)

MADGE. There he is—(*With photo*)

ESTELLE. (*Sharply—with interest*) Where?

MADGE. Right here! He really is a handsome article! (*Looking at the picture critically*) If one cares for that type of beauty!

(*ESTELLE rises quickly, allowing the photos to drop—she advances toward table.*)

ESTELLE. (*To MADGE*) Where did you get that picture?

MADGE. (*Exaggerated sweetness*) Dick gave it to me—two years before he ever heard of you—but, of course, if Dick is your property—soul, heart and dancing pumps—(*Advancing with photo*)—I surrender his phiz!

ESTELLE. You may keep it, if you will treat it with proper respect. (*At L. of table*)

MADGE. Thanks. (*Turning to mantel*) We'll make Dick a real feature—surrounded by freaks! (*Placing photo conspicuously on mantel.* GRACE riss, *crossing to piano, where she arranges music*)

GRACE. The boys will feel flattered when they see the exhibit.

MADGE. (*At mantel*) That's why I'm doing it. (*Facing the others*) Every time you flatter a college boy, you get an ice-cream soda!

ROSE. I never saw a more accomplished politician than our Madgie—always trying to get something for nothing.

MAY. Are you really engaged to Dick, 'Stell?
(*Down near table*)

ESTELLE. Suppose I am? (*Returning to chair L. C.*)

ROSE. Are we supposed to suppose it?

ESTELLE. You're a shockingly inquisitive crowd.
(*Sitting*)

MADGE. (*Down R. of table—to ESTELLE*) It struck me that while you were on your vacation, you would meet someone who'd make you forget Dick Bradley.

ESTELLE. I don't want to forget him. He's been wonderfully nice to me—he came up to our camp this summer—and father is delighted with him.

MADGE. Dick is a darling—but some people say he is fickle.

ESTELLE. (*In irritation*) Oh, shut up, Madge—you're always plotting. I might give you a few shots about that scrub brother of mine—only, I feel the profoundest pity for anyone who can tolerate that untidy, undignified, silly, and useless person!
(*Her head in the air*)

(*Enter from C. D., PUNCH DOOLITTLE. He is always very brisk in speech and action—rattles off his lines in snappy fashion. His costumes is as varied and startling as has already been described.*)

PUNCH DOOLITTLE. Hello, sisters, cousins, and sweethearts! (*Advancing down to R. C.*)

OMNES. (*Except ESTELLE*) Hello, Punch!

PUNCH. May I come in? Thanks—glad to see you. (*Shaking his own hand*) Glad to see me—I knew you would be—delighted to return to our dear old classroom—how I love my books! How I love my teacher!—I wish every college in the country would fall and crumble into ashes—I do—so help me Josiah!

MADGE. (*Down R. of PUNCH*) Punch—you have no ambition!

PUNCH. (*C. facing MADGE*) I have a great ambition—I want to be your husband!

(*All the girls—except ESTELLE—scream in delight.*)

MADGE. (*Piqued*) You needn't tell the whole universe. (*Picking up a pillow from couch R. and giving it a vicious twist*)

PUNCH. There's nothing sneaky about me—when I hate, I hate hard—and when I love—I love out loud—so everybody can hear the rattle of my throbbing heart!

MADGE. Oh, Punch, don't! (*In some shyness, as she returns to mantel and photos*)

ESTELLE. (*To PUNCH, contemptuously*) You are a fine-looking object for a husband.

PUNCH. Did you ever see me look any sweller than this? (*Whirling around*)

ESTELLE. Never!

PUNCH. You never will! A tousled exterior, indicates an artistic interior—(*Suddenly rumpling his hair*) Me for the artistic peppermint—I mean temperament!

ESTELLE. (*In disgust*) What awful English!

PUNCH. That's not English—it's Irish, be dad! (*Abruptly, to MADGE*) Madge, are you going to give me a kiss?

MADGE. Stand back! didn't I warn you!

PUNCH. I'm not afraid of black-hand threats! (*Suddenly*) Great Peter! that reminds me—there's something in my pocket! (*Digging frantically at his pockets*)

(*All the girls regard him in startled surprise. ROSE stops playing with the photos, as she rises to kneeling position. MADGE down R. PUNCH C. GRACE L. of table, MAY back of table C. ESTELLE seated L. of C.*)

MADGE. (*In concern*) Is anything hurting you?

PUNCH. I don't know—(*Same business*)

ROSE. Are you in pain?

PUNCH. I'm in bad—if I ever find this—it belongs to Madge!

ESTELLE. A letter, I suppose!

PUNCH. Worse than that!

ESTELLE. A telephone message!

PUNCH. (*In comic anger*) Would I have a telephone in my pocket! (*Gritting his teeth at ESTELLE*) Dazzlingly intelligent—you!

MAY. What can it be?

GRACE. Money!

PUNCH. Nix—you'll never get the goods on me—(*In triumph*) Ah! Haha! Haha! (*Drawing a telegram from his pocket*) I have it!

ROSE. A telegram!

PUNCH. Yes, little one!

MADGE. Punch! you villain! how could you forget it! (*Jerking it out of his hand*)

PUNCH. I didn't—I've been wearing it next my aching heart—since yesterday morning!

ROSE. You're a monster! (*Rising—picking up pillow, which she tosses on couch*)

MAY. A wretch!

GRACE. A petrified rogue!

MADGE. (*Indignantly, holding telegram—unopened*) Can't you say you are sorry!

PUNCH. (*Gleefully*) I'm not sorry—(*Comic laugh*) Ha, ha, ha! I'm glad—tickled to death! he, he, he! I kept it deliberately, purposefully, with premeditated malice, and rabid, rapacious rascality! (*To ESTELLE*) That's English—do you get me?

(*All the girls advance in a semicircle, regarding PUNCH wrathfully. PUNCH C., in apparent terror.*)

MADGE. (*In haughty, menacing tone*) You will

have to make a better apology than that, Mr. Doolittle!

OMNES. (*Menacing tones*) Do better, Mr. Doolittle!

PUNCH. I do—do as little as I can do! (*The girls close about him*) Oh, I say, girlyes, don't shove—remember! I have a weak heart! (*Hand to his right side as he shivers*)

MADGE. (*In dramatic tone*) Explain! (*Pointing to telegram extended in her hand*)

OMNES. (*In highly dramatic manner*) Explain! (*All the girls pointing at him, menacingly*)

PUNCH. I will—I will—if you'll tell me what to say!

MADGE. The truth!

OMNES. The whole truth!

PUNCH. All right—I'll tell you the truth—with a hole in it.

MADGE. Nothing but the truth!

PUNCH. (*To MADGE*) You're just like Lady Macbeth—so unreasonable! (*Regarding MADGE resentfully*)

MADGE. Go on!

OMNES. Go on!

PUNCH. (*Fervently*) I'd love to—(*Glancing at door*)

MADGE. (*In anger*) How did you get this telegram?

PUNCH. I pinched it—it was lying on the hatrack—now, you know what a hatrack is—you don't know what a hatrack is? (*Regarding her in assumed amazement*)

OMNES. (*Loud and stern*) Go on!

PUNCH. Oh, Mama!

(*The girls pinion his arms, while MADGE pinches his ears.*)

MADGE. Confess!

PUNCH. Let go my telephone! (MADGE releases him) And relax your grip upon my wings! (The girls release him. In serio-comic manner) Away with subterfuge. Do you know what subterfuge is?

OMNES. We do!

PUNCH. Whatever it is—away with it! When I saw that innocent-looking message on the hatrack, and beheld to who it was addressed—(Indicating MADGE)—a mist floated before my eyes, and I was seized with a great jerk—a jumble! likewise a jingle in that region of which the poets sing—my heart! (Hand on his heart) Said I to myself, said I—“A rival! A rascally rusty cut-throat is trying to steal her from me!” And then into this jealous skull, there crept a great temptation—shall I open it?

MADGE. What—your skull!

OMNES. No!

PUNCH. As I was about to yield, my conscience smote—and smote hard—“Punch,” said the little voice, “heaven help you if you open that gram!” And I didn’t—conscience triumphed!

MADGE. (Severely) It wasn’t conscience—it was horse sense! (Opening telegram)

PUNCH. That’s better than conscience! (A step to L. C.)

ROSE. (To MADGE) Who’s it from, Madge?

GRACE. Anybody sick, at home?

MADGE. (Reading telegram) It’s from Letty. (Reading) “Meet 11 A. M. train if convenient. Love, from Letty.” (Startled) Oh! it’s after 11 o’clock now, and the poor child is waiting at the station!

ESTELLE. The new student! (Rising)

MADGE. (Increasing excitement) What will she think of me! (Advancing toward PUNCH) What can she think! and it’s all your fault! (Pushing PUNCH backward toward chair L. C.) Yours!

yours—you booby! (*Pushing PUNCH into the chair in a heap. Grinding her teeth as she stands over PUNCH in threatening indignation*) What kind of an opinion will she have of me?

PUNCH. You want to get *my* opinion of you! (*Attempting to rise—MADGE pushes him back*)

MADGE. Stay where you are!

PUNCH. Yes, your highness. (*Crumpling up in the chair*)

MADGE. (*Rattling on in the same manner*) Letty is coming here—to a strange town, a strange school—strange people——!

PUNCH. That's right—so strange they're in the freak class!

MADGE. She has never seen anything like this before!

PUNCH. I bet she hasn't!

MADGE. (*To girls*) Think of it, girls—never in all her life has she been away from a small town—and just because this—(*Indicating PUNCH*) *This* has a fit of mean, conceited, unfounded jealousy—this heartless, inhuman, iniquitous——

PUNCH. (*Bristling up*) Now, you stop calling me names!

MADGE. (*Continuing, excitedly*) All our plans are upset! Instead of standing here, I should be at the station!

PUNCH. (*Loud*) Why don't you go there!

MADGE. (*Indignantly, to PUNCH*) If ever I had a soft and tender regard for you—(*PUNCH rises quickly, grinning*)—your conduct has turned it to wormwood! (*PUNCH pauses abruptly*) You unhappy blunderer! (*PUNCH jumps back with a jerk*)

OMNES. Blunderer! (*Regarding him indignantly*)

PUNCH. (*To MADGE*) Won't you forgive me?

OMNES. (*Except MADGE*) No!

PUNCH. (*To girls*) I didn't ask you!

ESTELLE. Nobody could forgive you! (*At L. glaring at PUNCH*)

PUNCH. (*To ESTELLE*) Buttinsky!

MADGE. Look at the room! nothing ready—Oh, girls, girls! do something—anything—I'm so upset! (*The girls attempt to tidy the room, in much excitement*) The idea of being here when I should be at the station!

PUNCH. (*Excitedly*) Why don't you go?—the train won't come upstairs!

MADGE. (*To PUNCH*) You don't understand anything, do you?

PUNCH. (*Snappishly*) No, I don't—especially girls! (*Crossing to R. C.*) But I'm an amiable old thing—willing to learn. Do you want me to go and get the train—I mean do you want me to go and meet the train?

MADGE. (*Pausing up c., sharply*) No! (*PUNCH pauses abruptly*) No! (*Stamping her foot—PUNCH jumps*)

PUNCH. (*Down R. C. in confusion*) Oh, my nerves! They're just like that—and that—and that! (*Tossing his hands wildly about*)

MADGE. (*Down a step, to PUNCH, indignantly*) I see your scheme!

PUNCH. You see more than I do.

MADGE. You want to meet Letty first and boast about it!

OMNES. We see your scheme!

PUNCH. Such a thought never penetrated my innocent young mind! (*To MADGE*) Now, who's suspicious?—who's jealous?

MADGE. That's not jealousy—it's precaution!

PUNCH. (*Astonished*) Pre—oh! how sweetly ingenuous!

MADGE. You have been in college long enough to know the meaning of simple English words!

PUNCH. When I want to learn English, I don't go to college—I go to vaudeville. (*Sinking down*)

on couch R., a picture of discomfort and irritation. ROSE is back of couch R.)

ROSE. Don't sit there—I just straightened that pillow. (*Shoving PUNCH off the pillow and rearranging it*)

PUNCH. Oh, very well—I can go if I'm not allowed to sit down! (*Starting wrathfully up c.*)

MADGE. (*Up c., intercepting PUNCH*) Now, don't go out in that ugly temper!

PUNCH. This desperate mood may lead to my arrest—let me go—(*A slight effort to pass her*)

MADGE. Wait—you're not insulted?

PUNCH. (*Quick*) Yes, I am!

MADGE. (*Changing o gentle tone*) Who insulted you—May, you apologize—

MAY. (*Surprised and indignation*) What!

PUNCH. (*To MAY*) Apologize—or I won't go!

MADGE. Never mind them Punch—they're just back from vacation—some girls get an awful rough edge on during the summer! Here! (*She quickly places a chair forward a little—into this PUNCH sinks, with a sigh of relief, and smiling*)

ROSE. Don't place that chair in the way! (*She jerks the chair away, upsetting PUNCH*)

PUNCH. (*On floor*) I'm having a perfectly corking time! Oh, joy!

GRACE. You can't sit there—(*Stumbling over PUNCH*)

PUNCH. (*Determined tone*) I shall sit here until I'm shoveled out! (*Arranging himself with determination*)

(*Enter MISS RICE, C. D. She carries a large box of candy.*)

MISS RICE. My dear young ladies—

MADGE. (*Excitedly*) Oh, Ricey, has she come? Is she? Can't you answer? (*Excitedly, advancing toward MISS RICE*)

MISS RICE. (*In perplexity*) My dear, Miss Stevens—

ROSE. (*Close to MISS RICE, spying candy*) Oh, girls! Ricey has a box of candy! (*Taking box from MISS RICE, opening it*)

MISS RICE. With Mr. Bradley's compliments!

ESTELLE. What—Dick! (*Quickly joining others*) Is he here?

(*Enter from C. D. DICK BRADLEY.*)

DICK BRADLEY. You bet he's here!

OMNES. Oh, Dick! welcome back! Our own lovely Dick! When did you get in? etc., etc. (*They crowd about DICK, shaking his hand, slapping him on the shoulder, while they eat the candy, which is passed around*)

ROSE. How perfectly heavenly to have you with us! (*Eating candy*)

MISS RICE. (*Gently*) Young ladies, if you will subside—I'm sure Mr. Bradley has something to say.

DICK. Chuck full of talk—(*Looking at all*) The same old lovely crowd! (*Advancing down to R. of C., the girls following*) You all look mighty good to me! I'd like to kiss you all—may I? to me! (*Observing PUNCH, laughing*) What's the matter with Humpty-Dumpty—Hello, Punch, old top—(*Taking the hand PUNCH extends*) One—two—three! (*Jerking PUNCH to his feet*) Shake! (*Steadying PUNCH as he shakes his hand*) It's a surprise to see you here—I thought you had quit college?

PUNCH. My dad has an idea in the back of his mind that there is something here—(*Tapping his head*)—worth cultivating. Everybody else is convinced that I'm a ninnyhammer—but father persists in believing me a genius!

DICK. (*Promptly*) Nonsense—how could he think anything so foolish?

PUNCH. How's that? (*Looking at DICK*)

DICK. They say people without brains, are the happiest.

PUNCH. (*Piqued*) Oh, indeed! And somebody said that silence is golden!

MADGE. (*Advancing*) Dick, you're cruelly personal. All Punch needs is encouragement—then he will become something—(*Regarding PUNCH with pride*)—something great!

PUNCH. You bet I will—if it's only a great bicycle rider!

MADGE. That's better than nothing. (*Thrusting her arm though that of PUNCH and drawing him toward the circle where they are eating candy*)

ESTELLE. (L. C.) Dick—you haven't noticed *me*! (*Pouting a little*)

DICK. (*Advancing to her*) Great pleasures come last! (*Bowing to her. ESTELLE, pleased, advances a step, extending her hand*) You look as stunning as ever. (*Taking her hand*)

ESTELLE. (*Pleased*) Thank you. Did you enjoy your vacation?

DICK. Did I? (*Retaining her hand*) Immensely—you should have been with us—the greatest lot of old grinds! you would have made a hit with them—and talk about girls! Peaches! the finest collection of girls——!

ESTELLE. (*Withdrawing her hand, tone of disappointment*) Oh! I thought you cared very little for girls!

DICK. (*In surprise*) What! How could you ever think it! A pretty girl certainly finds a slave in me! (*A step nearer her*) You ought to know that, Stella.

ESTELLE. (*Seriously*) Dick, I don't know quite what to think of you—(*Crossing slowly to couch R.*) I've been trying to puzzle you out—but I don't

understand you. (*Sinking on couch R. C., looking at him*)

DICK. (C.) Really! It is flattering to know that someone is thinking of you. (*Advancing, sitting beside ESTELLE*)

ESTELLE. Were you thinking—of me?

DICK. (*Cheerily*) Of course I was—it's our duty to think of our neighbors—a sentiment that is not shared by our fellow students! (*Glancing around at the others busy eating the candy*)

GRACE. (*Advancing, with small piece of candy*) Dick, don't you want some candy? Do have some! (*Extending the small piece*)

DICK. Thank you—we appreciate your generosity—(*Looking at the piece in her hand*) But don't let us deprive you. (*Drawing another, smaller box, from his pocket*) Estelle shall enjoy her own exclusive box for her own sweet self. (*Giving ESTELLE the box*)

ESTELLE. (*In delight*) Oh! Dick! Then you really did remember me in spite of all those lovely girls!

DICK. You are much in my thoughts, Estelle, that's the truth! Are we going to be good friends this year?

ESTELLE. I hope so—father and mother think very highly of you.

DICK. Isn't that nice! Thank you ever so much. Shall we open this and pass it around—as a good example? (*Indicating box*)

ESTELLE. No, indeed! I shall keep every bit—because you gave it to me!

(GEORGE WASHINGTON WATTS *speaks outside C. D.*)

GEORGE. Miss Rice—excuse me, Miss Rice—(*Enter GEORGE C. door*) Excuse me—Miss Rice—MISS RICE. What is it, George?

DICK. (*Rising*) Hello, George—how are you?

GEORGE. Bless my soul! If it ain't Mr. Bradley—(*Advancing down to L. of c.*) I'se pow'ful overjoyed to see you, Mr. Bradley—

DICK. (*Advancing, light laugh*) I'm glad to see you, George. (*Extending his hand. GEORGE looks at the extended hand, a bit surprised, then extends his hand to DICK, who takes it*) I thought you had gone to Europe to join the Russian army!

GEORGE. Me? I ain't got no kind o' use fo' no Russian army—no sah—I didn't go to Russia—went to Baltimore, yes sah—I don't b'lieve in no war, Mr. Dick—'deed I doesn't. I'm fo' peace—universal—, anniversal peace! The everlastin' union of brotherly love!

DICK. That's a fine speech, George—(*Shaking his hand approvingly*) you're a good citizen.

ROSE. Hurrah for George Washington Watts!

(GEORGE grins and bows to ROSE. PUNCH rushes down c. between DICK and GEORGE, in aggressive fashion.)

PUNCH. Did you come in here just to spout peace?

GEORGE. (*Retreating a step*) I camed up here to tell Miss Rice thars a young lady waitin' down stairs—

MADGE. (*Excitedly*) A young lady—I know who it is! (*Starting toward c. door*)

MISS RICE. Perhaps you are mistaken, Miss Stevens—I will go. (*To c. door*) Come George—hurry! (*Exit*)

GEORGE. Yes'm. (*Going lazily toward c. door*)

MADGE. Send her up here—and do, hurry!

GEORGE. Yes'm—I'se a hurryin'—(*Going lazily out c. d.*) I'se a hurryin'!

MADGE. (*Excitedly*) I'm sure it's Letty! (*Rushing over to couch R. and arranging cushions*)

MAY. Don't get so excited Madge—

MADGE. I'm not excited—not a bit—(*Excitedly thrusting a chair into position*)

GRACE. Anybody would think your Letty friend a most exceptional person and the only NEW CO-ED that every struck the place

DICK. Is she pretty, Madge?

MADGE. Beautiful! Wait until you see her!

DICK. Beautiful! That hits me!

(*Over to L. where he straightens his collar and brushes up generally. ESTELLE, with a frown of apprehension, rises, remaining down R. watching C. D. The others tidy the room a bit, while PUNCH, sits on the piano stool, his hands clasped about his knee in careless fashion. MADGE pauses down R. regarding PUNCH critically.*)

MADGE. Punchy, dear, would you mind tying your shoestring?

PUNCH. (*Maintaining his position*) Which one?

MADGE. Both—so your appearance will not quite disgrace us.

PUNCH. (*Sighing*) You're always putting heavy responsibilities up to me. (*Remaining on stool, tying his shoestrings*)

GRACE. What's the right name of this great friend of yours? (*Back of table c.*)

MADGE. (*Down R. c.*) Her name is Letitia Willis!

GRACE, MAY and ROSE. Letitia! (*Elevating their brows*)

PUNCH. Ye gods!

ESTELLE. What an old-fashioned name!

GRACE. (*Mimicing*) A worthy companion to Cy Perkins, by heck!

MAY. (*Same manner*) Straight from Hicksville Junction!

ROSE. On the Boston and Maine—dew tell!

ESTELLE. An out-of-date, bashful, awkward, underfed—and underbred country gawk!

(DICK regards ESTELLE in surprise, then watches the others with curiosity, in a somewhat thoughtful mood)

MADGE. (*Biting sarcasm*) Are you all through? Anything more—you spiteful things! Everyone of you! (*To PUNCH*) You too!

(*The girls regard MADGE in subdued surprise.*)

PUNCH. What are you jumping on me for, Madgie, love?

MADGE. You ought to be ashamed to have such a sister!

PUNCH. (*Rising*) I am ashamed!

MADGE. Silence! I have the floor! (PUNCH retreats) I will tell you who my friend is—then you can say what you please. Letty Willis, is an orphan. (*All attentive, and serious*) Her father and mother died when she was a tiny child. She lives with her grandparents in a little town—it's not on the Boston and Maine—it's a hamlet near Schenectady. Letty is a country girl; she is poor, her clothing is plain—some of you may call it—cheap. (*Looking fixedly at ESTELLE*)—out of style; she is a sensitive girl, with lofty ideals—she is considerate of the feelings of others—as a true woman should be—she is a lady—(*Looking about the circle*)—which is more than can be said of some persons. She is going to be my room-mate, and I intend to fight for her, right or wrong!

DICK. Bravo! good for Madge!

PUNCH. Some call! Girls, are we ladies?

GRACE. Ladies and gentlemen——

ROSE and MAY. Present!

(The three girls advance down-stage in file.)

GRACE. How do we feel?

(PUNCH joins the line.)

PUNCH. Like a pincushion with rusty safeties sticking in me!

DICK. *(Advancing a step, to MADGE)* How are we to get acquainted with your friend?

PUNCH. What's she up in?

MADGE. Everything that *you* are not. *(PUNCH looks so crestfallen, the girls laugh at him. To PUNCH)* You can't talk to *her*—poor muddled little chap—you have no brains!

PUNCH. If I could only convince father of that!

DICK. Shall we talk science, botony, chemistry, sociology, or art and literature?

ESTELLE. (R.) Dick, how absurd! What would a girl from a farm know about art and literature!

PUNCH. *(To ESTELLE)* She wouldn't have to ride far to beat *you*. *(To all)* 'Stell isn't sure who wrote Hamlet—and as for art—she couldn't tell us who painted the Gold Dust Twins!

(Enter from c. door, GEORGE, carrying a suit-case.)

GEORGE. Excuse me, excuse me—*(To MADGE)* The lady is here what you was all along expectin'—Miss Letitia Willis.

(Enter c. d., MISS RICE, accompanied by LETTY WILLIS.)

MISS RICE. Young ladies, this is Miss Willis—

(All eyes on LETTY.)

MADGE. *(With a cry of delight)* Letty! *(Rushing to her)*

LETTY. Madge!

MADGE. My darling, dearest Letty! (*The girls embrace in extravagant fashion*) You love—(*Kissing her*) Oh! Oh! How gloriously glad I am to see you!

(*Positions for this situation:—After GEORGE announces LETTY, while he stands near C. D., he moves to R. near mantel. ESTELLE is down-stage R. DICK is well over L. down-stage. PUNCH L. of C. down-stage. MADGE R. of C. in front of couch. MAY, GRACE and ROSE, who have been in line down C. move, at the entrance of GEORGE, to a position near the piano L. When MISS RICE enters and speaks, she moves a little to the R. above table C., leaving the center of the stage clear for the meeting of MADGE and LETTY.*)

LETTY. (*Affectionately*) And I am glad to see you Madge, dear.

MADGE. (*Excitedly*) What must you think of me! Missing you at the train—all because of the horrible mistake of a stupid boy——

(*All have been watching LETTY, all now look at PUNCH, who shrinks over toward DICK, attempting to hide behind him—DICK shoves him away, glaring at him.*)

LETTY. It's just as well, because the train was late—terribly late.

(*PUNCH, once more courageous, swelling with pride, advances a step.*)

MADGE. (*Fussing about LETTY*) Take off your gloves and your hat—(*Quickly removing LETTY's hat*) You poor dear—you must be tired and hungry

—will someone have manners enough to take this hat? (*Thrusting it carelessly into PUNCH's hand—he takes it gingerly, not knowing what to do with it, GEORGE regards PUNCH with a broad grin*)

LETTY. Don't fuss, Madge—you know I am used to waiting on myself.

MADGE. Aren't you starved and thirsty?—let's go to the dining-room—(*Thrusting her arm through that of LETTY, about to turn up c.*)

(*All regard MADGE in astonishment.*)

ALL. (*Except MISS RICE and GEORGE*) Madge!

PUNCH. Some manners! Why don't you introduce us? (*Handling the hat in reckless fashion*)

(*MADGE pauses, facing the others, in affected surprise.*)

MADGE. O-h! do you really want to know my friend?

GRACE. Madge! don't be mean!

MISS RICE. I am sure the young ladies will be delighted to make the acquaintance of Miss Willis.

PUNCH. Don't forget the young men—that's me. (*He pinches PUNCH, which makes him squirm*)

(*MADGE indicates each one as she introduces them. Through all the foregoing scene, ESTELLE has remained R. immovable, regarding LETTY with steady, critical disapproval.*)

MADGE. This is Miss Rice—our dear, Miss Rice, the landlady——

MISS RICE. (*In gentle, kindly manner*) You are welcome to my house, Miss Willis—I shall do all I possibly can to make you feel at home.

LETTY. You are very kind. I promise always to be in time for breakfast!

MADGE. This is May and Grace and Rose—they

have family names, but goodness me! we cut those long ago!

(The three girls greet LETTY in a friendly manner.)

MAY. *(Advancing a step)* We've heard heaps about you, Miss Willis——

LETTY. I must be Letty to you, if you are——

MAY. I'm May—that, over there, is Grace—*(Indicating)*—and little Rose, the Rambler——

LETTY. *(To GRACE and ROSE)* I am so pleased to know you all.

(PUNCH is awaiting his turn impatiently, nervously twirling LETTY's hat. DICK, also impatient, stands back of PUNCH.)

ROSE. We are going to love you! I can feel it!

MAY. So do I.

MADGE. *(Leading LETTY to PUNCH)* This—we call this Punch—nobody knows why—*(Abruptly)* What are you doing with that hat! Such abuse! *(Taking the hat from PUNCH, passing it to MAY, who takes it, looking at it critically, then placing it on table c.)*

LETTY. How do you do, Mr. Punch?

(The girls laugh, at which LETTY shows some embarrassment.)

MADGE. Family name, Doolittle—and he lives up to his name.

LETTY. I beg your pardon, Mr. Doolittle.

PUNCH. It's all right—I'd feel slighted if anybody treated me like a human being. *(Taking LETTY by the arm leading her to ESTELLE. DICK attempts to attract MADGE's attention—she ignores him, turning up-stage a step. Facing ESTELLE)* Let me show you something—would you ever think

that swell-looking affair is a relative of mine? (*Indicating ESTELLE*) Great to look at, ain't she?

ESTELLE. (*With dignity*) I am Estelle Doolittle, Miss Willis—

LETTY. Letty to you as well as to the others.

ESTELLE. (*Haughtily*) I prefer to call you Miss Willis—at least until we are better acquainted.

MADGE. (*Indicating GEORGE*) The blonde over there is George Washington Watts! (*GEORGE grins and chuckles, as LETTY bows to him*) Now, you know all of us! (*DICK, ignored, displays great impatience*) Let's all escort Letty to her room—(*Taking LETTY by the arm*)

GEORGE. Right this way, Missus—excuse me—(*Exit C. D. carrying suit-case*)

MISS RICE. There's lots of baggage to take upstairs—(*Advancing toward C. with ROSE*)

MADGE. Punch, there's a job for you.

PUNCH. Thanks—I love hard work! (*Taking MADGE by the arm*)

(*Exit MISS RICE and ROSE C. door, followed by MADGE, LETTY and PUNCH, arm in arm, laughing and chatting—followed by GRACE, MAY and ESTELLE. The laughter and voices in conversation outside, gradually die out.*)

DICK. (*C. in high indignation*) Well! for a case of freezeout—this takes the trophy! It's a scurvy trick! a job—oozing from the brain of that imp, Madge Stevens! I'll square it—I'll square it if I have to commit a crime! (*At table C.*) I'll show them something—(*Re-enter GEORGE, C. door. To GEORGE, snappy tone*) What do you want?

GEORGE. Excuse me, Mr. Dick—Miss Willis done forgotten her hat—(*Advancing to table about to pick up hat. DICK R. of table, GEORGE L.*)

DICK. Hands off! (*His hand on the hat*) Nothing doing! (*Seizing the hat recklessly*)

GEORGE. (*In apprehension*) Laws me! Mr. Dick—look at the way you's a scrunchin' that hat!

DICK. Clear out—(*GEORGE, amazed*) Wait—(*GEORGE stops short*) Take that and feel sorry you can't find it! (*Tossing GEORGE a quarter*)

GEORGE. (*Regarding the money with pleasure*) I reckon that's what they done call embezzlement! I sure am sorr'—I can't find that hat! (*He looks under a chair, and the table, as he pockets the money*)

DICK. I'll show that crowd how to put one over on me! Here—(*Tossing GEORGE another coin*) Let me see fifty cnts' worth of grief!

GEORGE. (*Comic outburst*) Oh! oh! I sure am bustin' with sorr'! (*Up to c. D.*) Oh! I nev' can find that hat! (*Moaning dismally*) O-h! o-h! I'se a hurryin'—I'se a hurry'! (*Exit c. D.*)

DICK. (*Regarding hat*) Her hat! Isn't it cute! (*Drawing out the hatpins*) Jupiter! look at the bayonets! (*Thrusting the pins into the hat, crossing to piano L., where he places hat on top of piano*) If anybody wants this hat, they will have to capture it over armed resistance! (*Seating himself at piano, he strikes the keys in a reckless, discordant fashion, then runs the scale—vocal—if he sings*) Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! (*Enter LETTY quickly from c. D., she starts toward the table, then pauses abruptly as DICK strikes a crashing discord*) Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!

LETTY. I beg your pardon—

(DICK jumps up.)

DICK. I beg your pardon—(*Facing LETTY*)

LETTY. I am looking for my hat. (*Looking straight at the hat on piano*)

DICK. (*Innocently*) Really someone must have taken it!

LETTY. Evidently—since I left it on the table,

and now—it is on—the piano! (*Smiling, as she points to it*)

DICK. (*Innocently*) You don't mean it! Is this it? (*Picking up the hat*)

LETTY. Yes. (DICK *extends the hat to her*)
Thank you Mr.—Mr.—(*Taking hat*)

DICK. Dick Bradley——

LETTY. Thank you, Mr. Bradley.

DICK. You are welcome, Miss—Miss——

LETTY. Letty Willis——

DICK. You are welcome Miss Willis.

LETTY. (*Crossing a step toward R. C.*) It is very kind of you to help me find it. (*Pausing R. of C. arranging the trimmings on her hat*)

DICK. (*Down L. of LETTY*) Haven't you lost another hat? (*Looking aimlessly about*)

LETTY. This is the only hat I have! The girls are waiting for me. (*Glancing toward C. door, but making no move to go*)

DICK. Won't you sit down? (*Indicating couch R. C.*)

LETTY. No—(*Crossing to couch R. C.*) I must go. (*Seating herself comfortably on couch*)

DICK. Don't be in a hurry! (*Crossing to her*)

LETTY. I must! (*Remaining seated*)

DICK. So you're from Schenectady! (*Seating himself beside LETTY*)

LETTY. (*In surprise*) How did you know?

DICK. (*Airily*) I guessed! I've won medals for guessing—but I don't wear them.

LETTY. I was perfectly terrified at the thought of coming here.

DICK. Are you terrified now?

LETTY. No, indeed! you have all received me so beautifully!

DICK. We're a right decent bunch—once in a while a rough wave hits us—and there's a scramble for the life belts—then the cloud passes, and we are all friends again!

LETTY. Madge has told me about those little interruptions—isn't Madge splendid?

DICK. (*Warmly*) She certainly is—true blue. And Punch—oh, you'll love Punch—I mean, as a brother.

(*Enter ESTELLE C. D., observing DICK and LETTY, she looks at them in silence and displeasure. She gradually makes her way silently, crossing to L. door, which she opens—ready to step quickly off.*)

LETTY. And his sister?

DICK. Estelle?

LETTY. She is a very pretty girl.

DICK. *You can afford to say that. But we don't want to talk about Estelle—*

LETTY. The girls are waiting for me—in the dining-room. (*Rising*)

DICK. (*Rising*) Let me show you the way. (*He draws her hand through his arm*) This is a frightfully old-fashioned house—you'll need a guide through the winding passages.

(*Laughing and chatting they both turn up c. As they are about to run, ESTELLE steps quickly off L. LETTY and DICK proceed up c., talking and laughing, and off c. D. ESTELLE re-enters, looking after them in great displeasure.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—Same as ACT I. *The night of Hallowe'en. The room is profusely decorated with Hallowe'en decorations—grotesque heads, lanterns, streamers, and etc.*

AT RISE:—ESTELLE is seated in arm-chair L. C.,

arranging an ornament, or bow of ribbon. MAY is seated on the couch R., putting the finishing touches to her Hallowe'en costume. ROSE is seated flat on the table C. twisting some brilliantly colored flowers into shape, while GRACE is seated at the piano, playing and singing. GRACE cannot sing, but she persists in trying, much to the disgust of the other girls.

GRACE. (*Singing, in shrill, unmusical tones*)

"I pluck this lock of hair from off my head

To tell whence comes the one that I shall wed.
Fly, silken hair, fly, all the world around,
Until you reach the spot where my true love is
found."

(As she finishes in a discord, the girls groan.)

MAY. Help!

ROSE. Have mercy on us!

ESTELLE. Isn't that awful!

MAY. Anyone who suffers like that ought to see
a doctor!

ESTELLE. The S. P. C. A. will get you.

GRACE. (*Undisturbed*) Don't you care for it?
(*Turning over the sheet of music*)

MAY. It's worse than a boiler factory!

GRACE. Perhaps you'll like the next verse better—
(*She strikes the chord and starts again*)

"Last Hallowe'en I looked my love to see——"

(*Enter MISS RICE from C. D., carrying sewing materials—scissors, etc.—she comes in somewhat excitedly.*)

MISS RICE. (*In apprehension*) Young ladies!
what is the matter? I heard a most agonizing
noise——!

ESTELLE. It's Grace—she's torturing us—it's time to call a policeman.

GRACE. (*Whirling around on piano stool*) Yes, it is—to enjoin interference with my Constitutional Right—which, under the 'steenth Amendment, gives me the right to happiness.

ROSE. Happy! while we suffer!

MISS RICE. I don't understand——

ROSE. Grace is suffering from the delusion that she can *sing*.

MAY. Whereas, we call it disturbing the peace—that's a violation of the Penal Code!

ROSE. Let's have Grace arrested!

(MISS RICE *looks alarmed and horrified.*)

GRACE. Now the sheriff babbles! Hear our little Portia! (*Rising, crossing to MISS RICE and throwing an arm about her*) You'll protect me, won't you? The fact is, Ricey, they're jealous of my voice! They're afraid I'll reach the operatic stage, while they will never get beyond the typewriter!

(ESTELLE *rises, crossing to piano, which she closes, with a bang—all the others jump.*)

ESTELLE. You shall not—not if I must use force!

MISS RICE. Dear me! (*A sigh of relief*) What a relief! I thought someone was desperately ill!

GRACE. Oh, Ricey! you're against me, too! (*Good-naturedly turning up to R., where she arranges a decoration*)

MAY. (*To MISS RICE*) Dear, good lady, did you bring that tape I asked you for?

MISS RICE. (*Advancing down-stage*) Yes, Miss May, here it is. (*Giving MAY a length of tape*)

MAY. You darling—thanks—sorry I have to borrow. (*Taking the tape and using it in preparation of whatever she is working on*)

ROSE. (*To MISS RICE*) What about the scissors? I need them in my business.

MAY. I hope you don't intend to throw scraps on the floor! (*Throwing a cutting from her work, on the floor*)

MISS RICE. Here—(*Giving scissors to ROSE*) You won't cut wire with them, will you?

ROSE. Never—it's Grace who does that. (*Taking scissors, cutting and tossing scraps on floor*)

MISS RICE. (*Pausing c.*) Who asked for a thimble! (*Holding it up*)

MAY. Not me.

MISS RICE. Was it you, Miss Estelle?

ESTELLE. Nixey. (*Down to her former position L. of c.*)

MISS RICE. And somebody wanted pins, and black cotton, and hooks and eyes——

GRACE. It must have been May.

ROSE. May's workbasket always looks like a vacant lot.

ESTELLE. (*Crossing to table c.*) Get up, Rose—you're sitting on my book. (*Tipping ROSE over, as she draws her book from under her*) Look at it! You've fractured the ribs of every character! (*Down to chair L. c. where she sits, preparing to read*)

ROSE. (*To ESTELLE*) You lazy lizard! Reading a story when we're all so busy getting ready for the Hallowe'en party!

ESTELLE. Bother the party!

GRACE. (*To ESTELLE*) Now don't you spoil our blow-out!

(*MISS RICE has crossed to piano L. where she is arranging the music neatly. ROSE throws some more scraps on the floor. Presently, MISS RICE picks them up without murmuring.*)

ESTELLE. Have no fear—I won' be there.

MAY and ROSE. (*Surprised*) 'Stell!

MISS RICE. Dear me! The young ladies and gentlemen will miss you.

GRACE. 'Stell is only faking—she wants to be coaxed.

ESTELLE. I'm not coming—unless I can wear what I please, instead of one of those grotesque rigs that make you look like clowns!

MAY. I don't mind acting foolish once a year—one gets tired being permanently sensible—don't we, Ricey, dear? (*Throwing her scraps on the floor*)

MISS RICE. Yes, Miss May. (*Picking up the scraps, this time, with a sigh*)

GRACE. (*At table c.*) Seems to me, Estelle is a most sensiblest lady—as George Washington Watts would say. (*Picking up a paper flower and twisting it in her hair*) She displays to a marked degree, a superlative intelligence, at once commendable and refreshing!

ESTELLE. (*In irritation*) What you really mean to say is—you are glad I am not coming.

GRACE. What I really mean to say is—that you couldn't stay away—not if you were tied to a post in the cellar! You threatened to remain away from the championship game, but you were right in the center of the grandstand, when our star pitcher, Dick Bradley, shut out the Crescents without a run or a hit!

ESTELLE. (*With niterest*) Wasn't Dick splendid! He said he never could have won if my presence had not inspired him!

GRACE. He said the very same thing to me!

(*The other girls laugh good-naturedly, while MISS RICE, up-stage, smiles.*)

ROSE. I wonder if he said it to Letty Willis? (*Throwing more scraps on the floor, at which the*

smile fades from MISS RICE's face, and she sighs—not picking up the bits, this time)

MAY. Oh, no—Letty is too sensible.

GRACE. Thanks—sweetness.

ROSE. Letty and Dick are great friends, and no wonder. Letty has been in College only two months and she has scored over everybody.

GRACE. Dick thinks too much of her intelligence to talk nonsense.

ESTELLE. (*In irritation, to GRACE*) Grace, you are becoming perfectly unbearable—formerly, you were companionable, and a sweet little thing—but now, you display atrocious manners, and you are developing a spiteful nature that is disgraceful!

GRACE. (*Ironically*) Really, Stella, dear! If I am such an objectionable insect, I wonder you look at me at all! (*At L. of table*)

ESTELLE. What have I done to make you my enemy?

GRACE. (*Seriously, earnestly*) The only enemy you have, Stella, is your own envious, jealous temper! (*The other girls, pause in attention*) I am saying this for your good because—unless you check the little demon, your life is going to be wretchedly unhappy.

ESTELLE. (*Rising quickly, in anger*) What do you mean by jealous? Of whom should I be jealous!

MAY. (*Rising, quickly*) For heaven's sake, girls. stop bombarding!

MISS RICE. (*In distress*) Young ladies, dear me—dear me!

ROSE. 'Stell—why don't you try to be amiable, like me?

ESTELLE. I'm sick of you—all of you! (*Throwing her book into chair with a bang*) You all act as though you had been hypnotized by Madge and her hayseed friend—Letty Willis!

(ROSE gets down from her position on table.)

ROSE. Oh, 'Stell—that's mean!

GRACE. And Madge is the darlinest girl in the college—I've often heard *you* (ESTELLE)—say so.

ESTELLE. So I did until I found her out!

(MISS RICE, back of table c., quietly placing things in order.)

OMNES. (*Astonishment*) Found her out!

ESTELLE. (*Quick*) Madge is a hypocrite!

OMNES. Oh! Estelle! How can you!

ESTELLE. (*Her indignation increasing*) She is! She is completely fascinated by that rustic product—that Willis girl—a natural-born, stupid nobody!

GRACE. Letty isn't stupid—she's wonderfully bright!

ESTELLE. (*Sarcastically*) I see you have fallen under her spell——

MAY. She came off first in the algebra exam——

ESTELLE. She never would have gotten through if Madge hadn't helped her—she was too mean to help me five minutes—she wanted me to miss!

GRACE. I don't believe you really care—except that it sent you down a few pegs in the estimation of Dick Bradley.

ESTELLE. (*Bitterly*) I'll pay her off for that!

MISS RICE. (*In distress*) Oh, dear, dear me! I wouldn't think of it, Miss Estelle. (*Turning up to c. d. where she looks out anxiously*)

ROSE. It was Letty who helped Madge, and she offered to help you, Estelle, but you refused her in the rudest manner—Madge cried about it!

ESTELLE. (*Sarcasm*) Crocodile tears!

GRACE. What a fiendish mood you are in, Stella—what a turbulent spirit you are—say a little prayer for self-control.

ESTELLE. (*In bitter anger*) Why don't you

train for the pulpit?—you so delight in lecturing others! The Reverend Grace Hunter! (*Making GRACE an ironical bow*) Perhaps they'd give you a parish—and you could scold the congregation every Sunday—they couldn't escape, poor things!

MAY. Oh, girls, don't be hateful! (*Crossing to ESTELLE, placing an arm about her*) Estelle has a headache, or a toothache, or something has made her cross; isn't it so, dearie? (*Leading ESTELLE to L.*) She will come to our party because Dick will be there, and everything is going to be lovely!

MISS RICE. What a sweet peacemaker you are, Miss May! (*Picking up the scraps from the floor*) I asked Mr. Punch to bring some lemonade—it is so soothing to the nerves!

(*Enter PUNCH C. D. with pitcher of lemonade.*)

PUNCH. (*Loud tone*) Front! Stand aside for the United States male! (*GRACE, who is standing in his path, jumps aside*) Where do you want this champagne? (*Placing it on table*) Am I a good boy? Yes, Punch, you are. Hear, hear! Step right up, ladies, and don't forget to pay your checks to the cashier—right here! (*Indicating himself*)

GRACE. Punch, do you ever have a lucid moment?

PUNCH. Yes—when I'm asleep, and then I don't feel it.

ROSE. I'm terribly thirsty—won't somebody pour me a drink?

PUNCH. You'll have to drink from the pitcher! (*About to lift pitcher*)

GRACE. (*Preventing him*) Punch! have a little manners!

PUNCH. I have as little as I can!

ROSE. The idea of drinking from the pitcher! (*Regarding PUNCH indignantly*)

PUNCH. Don't we all bathe in the same ocean? Or perhaps you have your own private Atlantic!

GRACE. (*Holding pitcher*) What shall we do!

PUNCH. Stand still while I run and fetch a mug!
(*Starting toward c. door*)

(*Enter from c. d. GEORGE, with several tumblers.*)

GEORGE. Excuse me, Miss Rice, an' Mr. Punch—you done forgotten all 'bout them glasses—I reckon the young ladies ain't noways used to drinkin' out of a pump! (*Advancing, placing glasses on table, where GRACE placed the pitcher. MISS RICE down to back of table, pours lemonade. GEORGE retires a step up-stage*)

PUNCH. (*R. of table*) Give me the biggest glass because I have the biggest thirst!

(*MISS RICE pours lemonade, PUNCH reaches for it, when GRACE, who is L., takes it, ignoring PUNCH, she passes the glass politely to ESTELLE L.*)

GRACE. Here Dickie dewdrop!

ESTELLE. Not any.

(*MAY takes the glass, and again offers it to ESTELLE, who consents to take a sip. MISS RICE fills a glass for GRACE, who takes it; another for ROSE, then she pours what is left into the last glass—filling it about half.*)

MISS RICE. It seems quite short—you didn't make enough.

ROSE. You get left.

PUNCH. That wouldn't have happened if you had served me first. Never mind—I'll stimulate with a little tonic! (*Taking a flask from his pocket*)

GRACE.

Here's to Hallowe'en, drink her down, drink her down——

Here's to Hallowe'en, drink her down——

PUNCH.

Here's to Hallowe'en, drink her down——

(He takes glass from table and fills it from flask)

(MISS RICE observes the flask in horror.)

ROSE. Punch!

ESTELLE. *(Sternly, to PUNCH)* Punch Doolittle, what is that?

(MISS RICE throws up her hands in horror, while GEORGE grins broadly, rolling his eyes as he watches PUNCH.)

PUNCH. *(Calmly)* Darling sister, this is arnica!
(He continues to fill the glass) For that pain inside. Drink her down—drink her down! *(Drinking)*

MAY. *(In horror)* Punch! You'll poison yourself!

PUNCH. *(Airily)* What do I care—I'll make a beautiful corpse!

ESTELLE. I shall write to father this very night!

PUNCH. You better keep away from my father—he hates people who complain about his little boy Punch.

MISS RICE. *(In distress)* Of course I am not complaining, Mr. Doolittle—but my people are Temperance people—we have never had anything in the house resembling—spirits! *(Eyeing the bottle in horror)*

PUNCH. *(In business-like tone)* Miss Rice, this, is not a spirit—it bears no relation to anything ghostly or ghastly—the truth is—it is *Root Beer!* George Washington Watts, is that true?

GEORGE. (*Solemnly*) It am, Mr. Punch; it am, I swear! (*Holding up left hand*)

MISS RICE. (*To GEORGE, indignantly*) George, I forbid you to swear in my house!

GEORGE. Yes'm—(*Lowering his hand*) I takes back that swear!

MISS RICE. You say it is Root beer?

PUNCH. I said it.

MISS RICE. I used to know a family by the name of Root—but they all died many years ago! (*Sighing*)

PUNCH. That's it! They've been buried so long, they've sprouted! And now we get this exquisite beverage by the name of Root! (*Regarding her with great importance*)

MISS RICE. A memorial! How touching!

PUNCH. Yes—it is touching. (*Drinking*) Drink her down!

GEORGE. A touching, peaceable sentiment! Amen!

MISS RICE. Come, George, I have something for you to do! (*Taking pitcher, exits c. d.*)

GEORGE. Yes'm—I'm a hurryin'! (*Proceeding lazily to c. door*). Excuse me while I pop de popcorn! Popcorn am such a nice peaceable vegetable! (*Chuckling*) Dis am goin' to be a highly swell party, Mr. Punch, 'deed it am! (*Exit c. d. Singing*) Drink her down! Drink her down!

GRACE. (*At table, smelling the glass used by PUNCH*) Sarsaparilla!

ROSE. And poor Ricey nearly in fits!

PUNCH. (*Singing gaily*) Drink her down! Drink her down!

MAY. Now, that you have done all the mischief you can here, go gather the clans.

ROSE. Bring the apples and cabbage.

GRACE. Punch will do for a cabbage-head!

PUNCH. Thanks! (*Rushing toward c. d.—then pausing*) I once visited a lunatic asylum—one of

the bugs looked me over and exclaimed—"what a beautiful landscape!" (*He rushes off c. d. while the others laugh*)

ESTELLE. (*Advancing to c.*) Girls—girls—I have something to show you! (*Beckoning the other girls to her as she draws a letter from her pocket*)

OMNES. What is it?

(*They gather about her, leaning on each other's shoulders.*)

ROSE. A letter!

MAY. Who's it from?

GRACE. What's it about?

ESTELLE. It's about that rural—Letty Willis—it's from a lawyer in Schenectady—I've been investigating—her past!

(*The girls stare in amazement.*)

MAY. 'Stell!

ROSE. You talk like a problem play!

ESTELLE. Just as I am expected! (*Consulting letter*) Mr. Gray says that he has investigated most carefully; he learns that the Willis family is nobody. There is a grandma and a grandpa, and—think of it, girls—they do their own work—even the washing! And raise their own potatoes—because they are too poor to buy them! And the old folks sell the commonest sort of vegetables to get money for Letty's tuition! No wonder she looks such a fright! And that's the sort of a girl Madge Stevens wants us to receive as an equal!

MAY. Madge is a radical commonor.

ROSE. Says we are all equal in the sight of heaven!

ESTELLE. *This* isn't heaven!

GRACE. Indeed, it isn't—sometimes it's a good deal like the other place.

MAY. Perhaps Letty expects to graduate with high honors, and then turn her education to advantage.

ROSE. Pay back, and so on, and so forth.

GRACE. Of course that's the plan—and she'll beat us to it.

ESTELLE. What right has she to want a college career?—while her poor old grandparents slave to support her! She ought to be working in a factory!

MAY. I can't imagine Letty in a factory!

ROSE. Perhaps she expects to marry some rich chap and wipe out the score in one stroke!

ESTELLE. That's her game!

GRACE. Who in the world would she capture?

MAY. Most anybody—haven't you noticed how the boys adore her?

ROSE. I've noticed Dick Bradley—(*A step toward R.*)—And Dick's people just wallow in money!

ESTELLE. (*Sternly*) She shall not catch him—not if I have to warn him myself. Not if I have to tell him that she is an unscrupulous adventuress, without a dollar to her name!

MAY. It is hard on you, 'Stell.

ROSE. Dick used to be awfully sweet to you—(*Meaning* ESTELLE)

MAY. Before Letty came——

GRACE. Dick has a strong will—he knows his own mind.

ESTELLE. (*Sharply*) No man knows his own mind when a cunning woman is playing on his vanity!

MAY. Gracious! It begins to look foggy!

ESTELLE. (*Earnestly*) We have been friends and students here for three years—and I expect you girls to stand by me. Madge insisted on inviting that country gawk to our party, but we can make her uncomfortable.

MAY. Dick's coming, and all the worthwhile boys.

ESTELLE. (*Determined*) Something must be done to-night.

ROSE. Heavens! It's like a plot!

GRACE. (*Close to ESTELLE*) Shall we tell Dick you love him?

ESTELLE. (*Indignantly*) Don't you dare!

GRACE. Are you engaged to him? (*Picking up ESTELLE'S hand, looking for a ring*)

ESTELLE. I expect to be. (*Jerking her hand away*)

GRACE. Oh! Is that all! (*Turning away*) I expect to be President—when re-incarnation sets in.

MAY. Girls, it's really serious, and I sympathize with Estelle.

ROSE. Me too.

MAY. I've been in love myself—ever so many times—and it's awfully excruciating when the object of your dreams gives you the go-bye!

ESTELLE. You are darlings, May and Rose. (*An arm about each girl*) Remember, we are now allies—Grace may come in too—(*Looking at GRACE, smiling*)

GRACE. (*Standing aside*) I'm neutral—I do not intend to violate the treaty of common sense, by tying up to a sore-head! (*Looking at ESTELLE steadily*)

ROSE and MAY. (*In amazement*) Why, Gracie! how catty!

ESTELLE. Never mind—first we'll snub that Willis girl—she won't be dressed decently for the occasion—that will throw her in the shade—I have a lovely dress for to-night!

ROSE. You always have lovely dresses.

ESTELLE. (*Laughing, pleased*) Then—then I'll think of something else, or, perhaps, she will disgrace herself—I hope she will.

(PUNCH *rushes in* c. d. *followed by* DICK BRADLEY.)

PUNCH. Here's one of the youngsters, and there's more of 'em downstairs—on the steps, in the hall, on the stoop, and coming up the lane!

MAY. (*Quickly*) Where's the cabbage!

PUNCH. I forgot it! (*Rushing off* c. d.)

DICK. Here is my contribution! (*Drawing a small box from his pocket*)

OMNES. (*In delight*) Oh, Dick! show me—show us! (*They crowd about him, eager to inspect contents of the box*)

DICK. (*Laughing*) Nothing doing—curiosity bugs! Not until we get to the games! This is a prize!

OMNES. (*In delight*) I wonder what it is—O-h-h-oh! (*All eyes on box*)

ESTELLE. Good-evening Dick!

DICK. Hello, Estelle!

(*Enter* MADGE *quickly from* c. d.; *she wears* *Hallowe'en costume, and carries a box about the size of a show box.*)

MADGE. Hello, freshmen—the crew is all here. (*Down to table c.*) Everybody accepted the invitation and brought something! Look! (*Opening box*)

OMNES. (*In delight*) Oh!

ROSE. What darling little sandwiches! (*Looking in box*)

DICK. (*Lifting one, very small*) Does a spy-glass go with it? (*Laughing, as he returns it to box*)

MADGE. Shame, Dick! You are supposed to eat a hearty meal—at home—before you go visiting! (*Covering box*) But, oh, girls! What do you think—Ricey has revolted! Put her foot down

flat! Says we must eat in the dining-room instead of all over the house!

ESTELLE. That's mean!

MADGE. (*To ESTELLE*) Why, 'Stell, I thought you weren't coming?

DICK. Of course she is—(*Turning to ESTELLE*) I'd miss you awfully——

ESTELLE. (*Pleased*) Good of you to say so—spare me a moment while I slip on another frock.

DICK. You always look lovely——

ESTELLE. (*Highly pleased*) I'm going to wear that gown you like so much—(*Crossing to L. door*)

DICK. (*Down c.*) Oh, yes—that pink thing

ESTELLE. No, Dick—it's blue!

DICK. Of course—(*Laughing*) I always confuse pink and blue—but you look stunning no matter what you wear!

ESTELLE. I'm so pleased you think so! (*Nodding to him, she exits quickly L.*)

MADGE. (*Advancing down to R. of DICK*) Dick, you'll have to cut it!

DICK. All right—you mean the cake?

MADGE. I mean the compliments—you toss at Estelle! (*DICK regards her in great surprise*) Estelle misunderstands them—unless you are really serious.

DICK. Pooh-pooh—tush-tush, little one!

MADGE. Estelle thinks you are in love with her.

DICK. About as much as I am with Castor Oil.

MADGE. She takes everything seriously, and believes all your compliments.

DICK. Those old compts I've been working for thirty-seven years! Stuff! I say them to everybody—even to you—and heaven knows, I'm not in love with you!

MADGE. I'm glad to hear it, although it's rude of you to brag about it! I don't believe you are

truthful. (*A step nearer*) Wouldn't it be different with Letty?

DICK. (*Sharply*) Letty! Mind your own business, Madge—you're as fresh as mud in the country! What I say to Letty is my affair—mine!

MADGE. It's mine, too, because Letty is under my protection—I'm her special policeman, and I'm on duty every minute! (*Regarding DICK defiantly, but good-naturedly*)

(PUNCH rushes in c. d. with a pan of apples.)

PUNCH. Here's the cabbage! (*He tosses them all about the floor*)

OMNES. Oh, Punch—you crazy Punch!

MAY. Will you fetch the cabbage?

PUNCH. I forgot it! (*He slams the pan on his head, and rushes out c. d. Enter LETTY c. d. as PUNCH is going out—they nearly collide*) Excuse me—drink her down—drink her down!

(PUNCH rushes off, as LETTY advances, laughing.)

ROSE. What shall we do with the apples?

(*All the girls busy picking up the apples.*)

MADGE. We are going to play snap apple—that means a lot of apples in a tub of water, and the one selected by the crowd must dive for them!

DICK. And fall in—that would suit Punch!

MADGE. But we'll have to play it in the laundry, because Miss Rice will not let us have a wash-tub in the parlor!

GRACE. Isn't that mean!

ROSE. Ricey is on the war-path!

MAY. She's suspicious since Punch sprung that Root beer joke!

(PUNCH *rushes in c. d. with a very large cabbage.*)

PUNCH. Here's the water-melon!

GRACE. At last! Now, I'll fix the cabbage patch! Where shall we have it?

MADGE. Over there where Dick is—Dick, get out of the way!

(PUNCH *jerks DICK aside, while GRACE places the cabbage on the floor, well down L.*)

ROSE. How do we play this game?

MADGE. At a signal, everybody rushes for the cabbage! Then we all tackle the one who gets it, and begin tearing it apart! The one who gets the most leaves, will marry first——

PUNCH. And often!

MADGE. The first number will be the opening chorus—everybody must go after that—and return in proper attire for the games!

PUNCH. I want to play the ghost? Where's my sheet? (*Rushing out c. d. Change to Hallowe'en costume*)

MADGE. Help me! (*DICK quickly takes hold of one end of c. table, MADGE the other, they move it over to R.*) Dick, you can be announcer!

DICK. Ladies and gentlemen, the Glee Club will now entertain us with choice selections!

(NOTE:—If desired, the number to be sung may be announced.)

(*Enter c. d., a number of the students, boys and girls, in Hallowe'en costumes. They sing, and render any specialties desired. At conclusion of this exercise, all march off, including all the characters, except DICK and LETTY. MADGE, GRACE and MAY change to Hallowe'en costumes.*)

DICK. (C.) What a noisy mob! I don't care much for this kind of a scramble—do you?

LETTY. (R. of c.) It is all new to me, and they are so happy!

DICK. (*Light tone*) It is easy to be happy!

LETTY. (*Thoughtfully*) Yes—for some people, Mr. Bradley—

DICK. (*Quickly*) Now, don't call me Mr. Bradley—

LETTY. (*Looking at him*) You are Mr. Bradley.

DICK. (*Another step forward*) I am *Dick*—I told you that before.

LETTY. I must have—forgotten it.

DICK. It's an awful sin to become absent-minded. (*Looking at LETTY*)

LETTY. I suppose I commit lots of sins—Madge says so.

DICK. (*In irritation*) Does Madge *dare* find fault with *you*!

LETTY. Oh, yes. We have an "Own-up" Club—it meets every night—we tell our faults, and Madge is the judge—she's elected for three months—she pronounces some terrific sentences—didn't you know?

DICK. (*In comic amazement and indignation*) Well, of all the dastardly—why, that's worse than arson! Madge, eh! I suppose Madge invented it, Madge runs it, and Madge bosses the whole diabolical scheme!

LETTY. It isn't diabolical—it's beautiful and holy—it means right thinking and a clear conscience—or Madge will search us out, and send us to the block! (*A light laugh as she turns toward couch R.*)

DICK. A sort of fraternal confessional—but *you* never have any sins to confess! (*Advancing toward LETTY*)

LETTY. Indeed, I have! (*Sinking on couch*)

Sometimes I get terribly discouraged, and then I complain about everything!

DICK. Discouraged? (*Sitting beside her*)

LETTY. I may be obliged to leave college. (*Sighing*)

DICK. (*In surprise and apprehension*) Leave! Before the end of the term!

LETTY. Yes—I am wholly dependent upon my grandparents—it is too great a sacrifice for them.

DICK. (*Thoughtfully*) I see. (*Looking away*)

LETTY. If I did not cost them so much, they might sell the little farmhouse and move into the town, where they would not have to work so hard—I could go back to them and find employment—in a store or somewhere—and take care of them!

DICK. In a store! That would be awful drudgery for you—it is impossible to think of it!

LETTY. Oh, no, it isn't, Mr. Bradley——

DICK. (*Correcting—firmly*) Dick!

LETTY. I mean—Dick.

DICK. That's better. But you must drop the other plan—it is suicide for you and it's—(*loftily*)—it's treason to me! (*LETTY regards him in astonishment. Solemn firmness*) Yes, it's treason—and that's a monstrous crime! You promised to be my friend to the end of the term, and now you threaten to break the contract before Christmas!

LETTY. I could still be your friend.

DICK. Not in Schenectady—you would forget all about me.

LETTY. (*Earnestly*) Please don't say that.

DICK. (*Rising—stubbornly*) I will say it—I take no such risk! Grandparents can sell the farm—(*vaguely*)—they'll get an immense price for it—real estate is on the boom, now—why! They'll be rich enough to live without working!

LETTY. (*Smiling*) It is kind of you to look at it so optimistically—but they could never get very

much for our little house. (*Drawing a small photograph from her belt*) See—what a tiny ramshackle place it is!

DICK. (*Dropping on couch, looking at picture*) Is that your home? (*Looking at it earnestly*)

LETTY. Yes—the roof leaks, the front steps sag in a most threatening manner, and the plastering in the parlor yawns like a sleepy old man!

DICK. (*Studying picture*) It looks picturesque.

LETTY. It is pretty in spite of the dilapidation—there are shrubs and flowers of which grandfather is so proud! and trees—some of them more than one hundred years old! But one cannot live on trees! (*Sighing*)

DICK. And broad acres of fertile land—as they say in the advertisements—that's what gets the money.

LETTY. (*In surprise*) Do you really think anyone would buy it?

DICK. Do I?—why, there are people who would jump at it! You leave it to me! (*Absent-mindedly placing the picture in his pocket*) I'll find you a customer inside of thirty days! (*Rising*)

LETTY. (*Joyfully*) O-h! Dick! (*Pausing abruptly at her own enthusiasm*)

DICK. That's right! (*Taking both her hands*) That's the way I want you to say it—as if you mean it!

(*Enter ESTELLE, who has on party dress, from L., quickly; she pauses abruptly as she observes DICK and LETTY.*)

ESTELLE. Oh! I beg your pardon! (*DICK and LETTY turn toward ESTELLE, DICK still holding one of LETTY's hands. To LETTY, friendly*) Aren't you going to dress for the party?

DICK. (*To ESTELLE, in irritation*) You're al-

ways thinking about clothes! Bother! (*Releasing LETTY*) There are more serious things in this world than frills! (*To L. of C. LETTY crosses to R.—ESTELLE looks after DICK*)

(*ESTELLE abruptly crosses to the table, which has been moved to R.*)

ESTELLE. I'm dying to see your prize! (*Her hand on box on table*)

DICK. I'll show it to you and Letty! (*Going to the table, he picks up the box and opens it—ESTELLE to L. of DICK*) But you must promise not to tell the others.

ESTELLE. Of course I promise—(*Looking at LETTY*) Miss Willis can speak for herself.

LETTY. (R.) I promise—Dick.

(*ESTELLE looks sharply at LETTY as she says: "DICK."*)

DICK. There! (*He opens the box and takes from it a small jewel-box containing a handsome ring, which he displays*)

ESTELLE. (*In surprise and pleasure*) Oh, Dick!

LETTY. How very beautiful!

ESTELLE. Are you really going to give it as a prize?

DICK. (*Indifferently*) Surely—think it's good enough?

ESTELLE. It's lovely—exquisite!

DICK. Madge threatened to have me expelled unless I gave something extra nice for the cabbage trick!

ESTELLE. I hope I win it! How about you, Miss Willis?

LETTY. I hope you do!

ESTELLE. (*To LETTY, in surprise*) Don't you want it?

LETTY. I should love it—but—I am not very lucky.

ESTELLE. Madge will scream with delight. (DICK gives her the ring, which she replaces in original wrappings) Are you going to leave it here? (Looking at table)

DICK. Certainly—on the table. (Crossing to L. of C.)

ESTELLE. Don't you think it risky—such a valuable ring? (Crossing to table R. with box)

DICK. I don't care much for that insinuation, Estelle—I never heard of anything disappearing in this house.

ESTELLE. Indeed? Why, I lost a bracelet only last week!

DICK. (In surprise) Is that so?

ESTELLE. I didn't make a fuss about it—but, it's gone. (To LETTY) Have you missed anything, Miss Willis?

LETTY. No—I don't own anything valuable.

ESTELLE. Oh! then of course you are secure. (Looking at LETTY with a disagreeable smile, as she leaves the box on table)

(Enter PUNCH C. D. followed by all the others, including a number of students. All in Hallowe'en costumes, which may be as grotesque as desired.)

PUNCH. Here we are—thirty-five strong!

NOTE:—Make this any number desired)

OMNES. Three cheers for our Madgie! (In boisterous manner, they whirl MADGE about) Three cheers for Punch! (Same bus.—whirling PUNCH about)

PUNCH. Madge wouldn't let me play ghost—she said I'm too fat!

(All laugh.)

OMNES. Three cheers for our Dick!

ESTELLE. (*Quick*) Wait! (*All pause*) Dick deserves three times three cheers—as you will agree when you see his beautiful prize!

OMNES. (*Boisterously*) Show us, Dick—what is it? Give us a look, old boy—etc.

DICK. You embarrass me—I'm too bashful!

ESTELLE. Let me show them! (*Quickly opening box, displaying ring*) Here it is—a diamond ring!

OMNES. (*Loud exclamations of delight*) Oh! What a beauty! Isn't it a shiner! Big as a head-light! Some ring! Dick, you're a dandy, etc. (*Crowding about ESTELLE to inspect the ring*).

MADGE. (R.) Dick, I'm so delighted, I could cry!

ROSE. What must we do to win it?

MADGE. Let's play cabbage first!

OMNES. Yes—yes—cabbage first! cabbage first! (*All talking and laughing*)

PUNCH. Madgie, tell us how.

(*All quiet while MADGE is speaking.*)

MADGE. First, we all go out of the room, then, we blindfold our eyes; then, one of the crowd comes in and moves the cabbage—then the room is empty, except for the one who moved the cabbage—we all rush in, hunt for the cabbage, and when we find it, we tear it to pieces—and the one who gets the most leaves——

DICK. Gets the ring!

MAY. Oh! how easy!

GRACE. Wait until you try it—you'll change your mind.

OMNES. (*Boisterous*) I hope I win—and I—and I—etc.—

GRACE. Who is going to move the cabbage?

MADGE. As it is Dick's prize, he should say.

DICK. Thanks—I appoint Miss Willis.

OMNES. Letty! (*All look at her in some surprise, ESTELLE showing disappointment*)

MADGE. Fine! Come on, chummies—everybody! (*Quickly leading the way out C. D.; the others noisily crowding after her*) Remember—no spying!

(*All exit C. D. boisterously. Instead of following the crowd, LETTY exits R. door, and ESTELLE goes to L. door, but not off the stage; she pauses a second after opening the door, and as the others disappear, she advances quickly and cautiously to table. She quickly takes the ring from the box, replacing the box on table, and goes quickly off L. Loud laughter outside, then diminish. Enter LETTY from R. She goes quickly to cabbage which she moves over to R. on the floor—then, she turns up to R. of C. D. calling off—*)

LETTY. All ready—come and find the cabbage!

(*In confusion and noisy manner, they all rush in C. D. all blindfolded. Enter ESTELLE from L. blindfolded. They begin the hunt for the cabbage—stumbling against each other, laughing—etc. Finally, PUNCH stumbles over the cabbage, and tumbles in a heap.*)

PUNCH. I've got it! I've got it! (*With a yell of triumph, they all start after PUNCH, and tear the cabbage to pieces, each one making sure to get the leaves called for in the count, or if they fail to do this, in the scramble, count only what each one secures. The cabbage is quickly stripped of leaves, and PUNCH is left with the stalk.*) I win! I win! (*Holding up the stalk*)

(*All strip off the bandages and laugh at PUNCH.*)

MADGE. Count your leaves girls—don't let the boys beat you!

MAY. (*Counting her leaves*) One, two—isn't that mean! (*Pouting*)

ROSE. (*Counting*) One, two, three and a half—

GRACE. (*Counting*) One, two and an eighth.

(*All laugh.*)

DICK. What about you, Madge?

MADGE. Nothing doing. (*Displaying a shred of a leaf*)

DICK. And Letty? (*Looking at her*)

PUNCH. She didn't even try.

MADGE. Look at Estelle—what a bunch! (*Indicating ESTELLE*)

ESTELLE. (*c. throwing leaves on the floor as she counts*) One, two, three, four, five, six—

OMNES. (*Loud*) 'Stell wins! 'Stell wins! (*All cheer*)

DICK. Estelle gets the ring.

ESTELLE. Oh—do I really! (*In affected display of pleasure*)

DICK. (*Quickly to table where he picks up box and hands to ESTELLE*) Allow me to present it, with the compliments of the class!

OMNES. Hurrah!

ESTELLE. (*Slowly opening box*) How shall I ever thank you?—it's so unexpected—(*She opens the box, and finds it empty. Startled, exclamation*) O-h!

OMNES. (*Startled*) What's the matter?

ESTELLE. The ring is not here!

OMNES. (*Consternation*) What—! (*Crowding forward*)

ESTELLE. (*Quickly*) You all saw me replace it in the box!

OMNES. (*Loud and confident*) Of course we did!

ESTELLE. It's gone! (*Staring at empty box*)

DICK. Look in the paper—it must have slipped out. (*Quickly examining wrappings*)

ESTELLE. No, Dick—the ring is gone. (*All astonished. Slowly*) Someone has taken it!

DICK. This knocks me, folks—but we're not going to cry about it! (*To ESTELLE*) I will send you another ring!

ESTELLE. Dick, that's kind of you, but it's not fair!

DICK. (*In surprise*) Why not?

ESTELLE. It is our duty to find the thief! (*To all*) Am I right!

OMNES. (*Loud and firm*) Yes—yes!

DICK. (*Sternly*) Right or wrong, I object to the word, thief! Don't say it again—any of you! (*To ESTELLE*) You shall have the prize you—won—if you never speak of this again!

ESTELLE. Why not?

DICK. It is for the honor of the class!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—Same as ACTS I and II. The room has been cleared of the former decorations. A few class flags, if desired, and some Autumn leaves, in vases on mantel—if available. The center-table and couch have been removed. A long table, or library table now stands R. of c. Several light chairs about the table. Center of the stage clear. The Dramatic Association of the college is about to hold an election and busi-

ness meeting. On the table, a gavel, some writing-paper, or pads, pencil, quite a collection of play books, in paper covers, and a ballot-box. This may be a pasteboard box, with a slit in the top.

AT RISE:—GEORGE WASHINGTON WATTS, is c., a play book in his hand, which he is regarding with great interest.

GEORGE. Das' a beau'ful play—by the name o' Hamlet! I cert'ly does admire that play—it's got so much excitement in it—some kind of a murder goin' on every minute—jes' like movin' pictures! This the part I like—dis right here—(*Striking pose and about to recite*)

“To be or not to be——”

(PUNCH *rushes in* c. d.)

PUNCH. Am I in time? I said I'd be in time this time, if I had to come at 3 A. M. Hello, George. (*Down R. of GEORGE*) There is going to be a business meeting of the Dramatic Club—(*Looking at his watch*)—called for eight o'clock—it is now 7:30 and nobody here! What's the answer?

GEORGE. (*L. of c.*) Laws! I dunno, Mr. Punch!

PUNCH. What are you holding in your fist? (*Advancing toward GEORGE*)

GEORGE. (*Embarrassed*) 'Tain't nothin'!

PUNCH. I know better—(*Taking book from GEORGE*)—it's a book,—a play book——

GEORGE. (*Uneasily*) I was jes' a readin' it, Mr. Punch! Laws! I does love them the-a-rat-ical plays!

PUNCH. Most of us have the dramatic instinct—look at me! I'm going to have a great part in the next college play!

GEORGE. (*With great interest*) You is? Is you goin' to play Hamlet?

PUNCH. Nix—I'm going to play the skull! (*GEORGE rolls his eyes in amazement*) It's an easy part—very little study—(*Abruptly*) Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him well!

GEORGE. Yorick! I nev' did hear o' him!

PUNCH. (*Reading*) He was a man of infinite jest——

GEORGE. Jest like you—always kidding'! (*Chuckling*)

PUNCH. (*Comic severity*) Silence, rogue! While I speak me spooch!

GEORGE. (*Advancing, with interest*) Mr. Punch—is you a actor?

PUNCH. (*Melodramatic*) Do I look like an actor? Do I act like an actor? No! I look like a clown and I act like a boob! Me an actor! You insult a great profession! (*Slamming the book on the table R.*) 7:45 and no one here! (*Looking at his watch*) This meeting stands adjourned! (*Starting for C. D.*)

(*Enter JIM YOUNG C. D. He is a studious-looking man, rather older than the others. He carries the Minute book.*)

YOUNG. Well! Punch! (*Looking at him in surprise*) You're on time!

PUNCH. I'm ashamed of myself for coming so early—I'm going outside and come in late!

YOUNG. George, bring a pitcher of water—we get dry—talking.

GEORGE. Yes, Mr. Young—I'se a hurryin'! (*Going lazily out C. D.*)

(*Enter ESTELLE from L. She carries a small account book.*)

PUNCH. (*To ESTELLE*) Hello, ice wagon!
(*Quickly up to C. D.*) Excuse me, while I tease the
cat! (*Rushing off C. D.*)

(*YOUNG R. of C. ESTELLE advances to C.*)

YOUNG. Good-evening, Estelle.

ESTELLE. Mr. Young—here is the list of names
to be presented for nomination. (*Handing book to*
YOUNG, who opens it, reading) You know I am
Chairman of the Committee on Nominations.

YOUNG. Are these the names of new members
who seek admission to the Dramatic Association?

ESTELLE. Yes?

YOUNG. Do you approve of all these candidates?

ESTELLE. All but one—(*YOUNG looks at her*
inquiringly) Letty Willis!

YOUNG. (*Inquiringly*) Letty?

ESTELLE. Of course she is Madge's candidate,
but I shall prevent her election.

YOUNG. Why so?

ESTELLE. We will not admit to membership a
girl we all believe is dishonest.

YOUNG. The incident of the ring?

ESTELLE. Yes. (*A step to L.*)

YOUNG. There is no sound reason for your
suspicion?

ESTELLE. Why, Mr. Young, how can you say
that? She was the only one who could have taken
it—she was alone in the room, and the ring disap-
peared. I think it most unfair of Dick to refuse
to investigate—it brings us all under suspicion.

YOUNG. I thought Dick acted most generously—
he offered to replace the ring—

ESTELLE. I could not accept his offer.

YOUNG. Dick is very jealous of the good name
of our class.

ESTELLE. So am I—(*Crossing to R. of C.*)—

That's why Dick should clear us. I'm going to speak to him about it.

YOUNG. I wouldn't—it's a sore point with Dick. (*Crossing to L. C.*)

ESTELLE. Why should he resent an inquiry? All the others invite it. *We* don't want to be suspected of theft!

(*Enter DICK C. D.*)

DICK. (*To YOUNG*) Hello, old grind! Ready for business? (*Down C.*)

YOUNG. (*L.*) In a few moments.

DICK. (*C. to ESTELLE*) What's the matter, Estelle? You look peevish.

ESTELLE. (*R.*) Dick, it's that ring that I cannot forget—the way it disappeared.

DICK. I asked you never to speak of it——

YOUNG. Estelle feels that the mystery should be cleared up—some of the others feel the same about it.

DICK. (*To YOUNG*) Do they? Are you one of them?

YOUNG. Well, it is a slur on all of us——

DICK. Why so? Don't you think it would be worse if we compelled some boy or girl to stand forth and say—"I am guilty!"?

ESTELLE. But you could inquire, secretly.

DICK. On the sneak! (*Sternly*) That's not my nature.

ESTELLE. (*An outburst of indignation*) You don't want to know! You are shielding someone!

DICK. I am shielding the honor of the class! If any of my fellow students did this, I don't want to know it! I want to believe in them—and blame myself for placing temptation in the way!

YOUNG. It's wonderfully generous of you, Dick——

DICK. Don't call it generous—it's selfishness.

There's the softest old spot right here—(*Tapping his heart*)—for everyone of you! What's a ring, compared with a good name!

YOUNG. It must have cost a couple of hundred.

DICK. I'd pay ten times that to save a friend.

YOUNG. Well, it was your gift—your loss—but I suppose Estelle does feel disappointed.

DICK. (*Looking at ESTELLE*) If Miss Doolittle wants a ring, I will be happy to present it—

ESTELLE. (*Quick*) Dick—

DICK. With the compliments of the class! (*Bowing to ESTELLE*)

YOUNG. That settles it. (*Turning to L. door*) The nomination of new members is very important. (*Consulting book in his hand*) Will you go over these names with me, Estelle? (*Exit L. leaving door open*)

ESTELLE. (*In distressed state of mind*) Dick—are you angry with me?

DICK. Why, no—

ESTELLE. You're displeased—you think I am vindictive—don't you?

DICK. I don't want to think anything so strong—

ESTELLE. Still you feel that I should say no more about your ring.

DICK. (*Gently*) Yes, I do feel that way about it, Estelle.

ESTELLE. (*With much feeling*) I have plenty of rings—see: (*Displaying her hands on the fingers of which are several handsome rings*) But it was your ring, I wanted! (*DICK looks at her in surprise*) And I was so glad when I—won it! The loss made me bitter—perhaps too bitter. You see, I am telling you just what my feelings are—will you forgive me? (*Extending her hand*)

DICK. (*Taking her hand in friendly manner*) There's nothing to forgive—I have a nasty, sharp tongue, at times—we'll call it square—shall we?—

the same old chums we always have been; what do you say?

ESTELLE. It's glorious to hear you say that—because you *have* been rather snappy to me.

DICK. I'm a beast—you can pinch me if you like——

ESTELLE. (*Light laugh*) I don't want to pinch you—but if you will go and help our hard-working coach—(*Indicating room L.*)—I'll be tremendously grateful.

DICK. Of course, I will—(*Turning quickly to L.*) I deserve a penance. (*Exit L. He closes door*)

ESTELLE. (*Up-stage, looking toward L. door*) If he knew—if he knew! What would he say—to me!

(*Enter from C. D. LETTY and MADGE, MADGE with her arm linked tightly in that of LETTY'S.*)

MADGE. (*Brightly*) Nobody here! What a late lot of sinners they are!

ESTELLE. I'm here. (*Advancing down L. c.*)

MADGE. Hello, Stella—(*Down C. LETTY on her R.*) Look at this backslider! (*Holding LETTY at arms-length*) Threatened—positively threatened not to come!

ESTELLE. (*Frigidly*) Indeed!

MADGE. And wouldn't tell me why—*me*—her guardian and custodian! I dragged her here! (*LETTY turns to R. she sighs and appears very depressed*) What's the matter with you, girlie? Had a quarrel with Dick?

LETTY. (*In distress*) Oh, Madge, please don't! (*Sinking in chair at table R.*)

MADGE. Got a toothache—headache—paralysis of the purse? Here, I can help you—(*Opening her hand-bag*) A check from home to-day—and I lost no time in converting it into negotiable coin! (*Drawing bills from her purse*)

LETTY. I don't want money—I don't want anything!

(ESTELLE is L., watching LETTY with a disagreeable smile.)

MADGE. (*Pausing, regarding LETTY*) Here's a girl who don't want money! A phenomena! (*Tucking money back in her purse*) All right, honey love, then I think it's just a case of dumps and blue devils! Better take a hot foot-bath—say a prayer and tuck into bed!

LETTY. (*Unusually sharp tone*) I should have done so, if you had not brought me here, against my will!

MADGE. (*In serious tone*) You say that as if you really mean it!

LETTY. (*Firmly*) I do mean it!

MADGE. And you won't tell me why this state of affairs?

ESTELLE. (*Quick interruption*) It's perfectly clear, Madge—Miss Willis feels her position.

MADGE. (*C. in surprise*) What position?

(LETTY seated R. listening, leaning her head dejectedly on her hand.)

ESTELLE. (*Affecting embarrassment*) Why, you know—what the whole class is talking about!

MADGE. (*In irritation*) For goodness' sake, what do you mean—in English?

ESTELLE. (*Sharply*) What is the use in pretending innocence? You know they are all talking about that ring—someone stole it—and naturally we all resent what that implies.

(LETTY rises, advancing a step, with dignity.)

LETTY. (*To ESTELLE*) Do you think I stole it, Miss Doolittle?

ESTELLE. (*Feigning embarrassment*) Oh—Miss Willis!

(MADGE C. *regarding first one, then the other.*)

LETTY. (*Firmly*) Do you?

ESTELLE. I don't suppose you care for *my* opinion—you never seemed to like me—although I have tried to be, your friend.

LETTY. Do any of the others think I took—the ring?

(MADGE *retires, backwards up c. a step, as LETTY advances toward c. Gradually working across to table.*)

ESTELLE. You are placing me in a very awkward position—as Dick says——

LETTY. (*Quick*) What does he say?

ESTELLE. (*Firmly*) I can't tell you. He has expressed himself to me in confidence—I shall not repeat what he said!

LETTY. He didn't say—(*Advancing*)—he didn't say that——

ESTELLE. (*Staring at her coldly*) Well—what do you think he said?

(LETTY C., *rapidly losing self-control*—MADGE *watching scene with much interest.*)

LETTY. (*Tearfully*) He *couldn't* say he thought I took his ring? (ESTELLE *turns aside to L.*) Will you tell me that much?

ESTELLE. I can tell you nothing—except that he is indignant—he is going to offer a reward for the return of the ring, and detection of the guilty person!

LETTY. (*Firmly, with head erect*) I hope he does! Then the gossip—the cruel suspicion will fall

upon the person who deserves it—instead of—upon me! (*In tears*) Oh, Madge—Madge! (*Weeping, as MADGE advances down R. placing arms about LETTY*)

MADGE. Don't cry—it breaks my heart—'Stell—you are horrid to talk like this! And when I see Dick—I'm going to box his ears—just for exercise! (*Aggressively rolling up her sleeves*)

LETTY. Please don't say anything to Mr. Bradley—about me—it only makes it worse!

MADGE. I feel like a fight—I'm going to hire a detective to ferret this out! (*To C. as LETTY turns to R.*) I wish I knew where Sherlock Holmes hangs out!

ESTELLE. (*Quickly*) You better not interfere with Dick—he's very quick-tempered,—he may tell you not to meddle!

MADGE. I've meddled all my life—that for Dick—(*Snapping her fingers contemptuously*)—and that and that! Do you suppose I'm going to stand for all this abuse against my darling Letty? No, Madam! Not if we have to call out the United States Army!

LETTY. (*Sadly*) That wouldn't clear me—you see how impossible it is for me to join your Association.

MADGE. I see that you are a great silly! I'm going to have my way or break up the club! The mixture of blood in my veins is now at the boiling point, and I'm out for a battle! Where's Dick? (*Turning around in a circle*) Where is he?

(*Enter DICK from L.*)

DICK. Did I hear my name? (*Advancing*)

MADGE. You did—(*Taking his hand and drawing him forward*) Go down on your knees! Instantly!

(*DICK shows comic amazement.*)

LETTY. (*In distress and indignation*) Madge—I forbid you!

DICK. What's the trouble?

MADGE. (*Severely to DICK*) Don't attempt to deny it! Perfidious Dick! All this time pretending you didn't care a fig about the ring—you were going about—throwing out hints!

DICK. (*In great amazement*) W-h-a-t!

MADGE. Isn't it true?

DICK. (*In rising indignation*) Now see here, Madge—you're a fine sport—and a first-class boss—but you can't call me a hypocrite—and get away with it! If you had a brother, I'd thrash him—as you haven't—I'll take it out on Punch—! (*Starting toward C. D.*)

MADGE. (*Intercepting him quickly*) Don't you dare molest Punch!

ESTELLE. I see no occasion for all this excitement!

DICK. (*Turning to her quickly*) That's a sensible remark, Miss Doolittle—very. (*Growing highly excited*) Very sensible, indeed! The essence of wisdom! I beg you to observe that *I* am not excited—not a bit! (*Drawing his handkerchief from his pocket and mopping his forehead*) I don't get excited about trifles—some people get excited about nothing—(*Glaring at MADGE*) That's not my nature—! (*Thrusting the handkerchief into his pocket*) I try to keep cool—even in the face of aggravating circumstances! (*Glaring at MADGE*)

MADGE. (*Comic indignation*) It is rude of you to call me a circumstance! I am a sweet girl, and a peacemaker—only you don't appreciate me! I am going to take Letty and go straight out! (*Advancing a step toward LETTY*)

DICK. (*Intercepting quickly*) No, you don't—you disorganizer! You're worse than a strike leader! Letty is going to remain right here! (*Drawing LETTY's arm through his*) You can take

Estelle and go where you like! (*Walking R. with LETTY*)

MADGE. (*c. in delight*) Madge, shake! (*Shaking her own hand*) As a plotter you are a prodigious success!

(*LETTY and DICK R. in earnest conversation; ESTELLE, L., mortified and surprised.*)

ESTELLE. I suppose I am in the way! (*Looking at DICK and LETTY*)

MADGE. (*Cheerfully*) Of course you are! Come on! (*Catching ESTELLE by the hand*) Let's go out on the balcony and count the moons! (*Laughing, she draws ESTELLE off C. D.*)

DICK. (*To LETTY*) What have I done to offend you?

LETTY. (*Dolefully*) Nothing!

DICK. There must be something—you frowned this morning, in chapel—your frowned at dinner, and you frowned at supper——

LETTY. I wasn't frowning at you!

DICK. You must have been, because I was looking at you all the time. Didn't you see me?

LETTY. (*After brief pause*) No! (*A step aside*)

DICK. (*Piqued*) Oh! You didn't even see me—I must be an interesting object——

LETTY. I was busy—eating!

DICK. Eating! (*Comic indignation*) You could eat—while I was starving—do you suppose I could eat when I felt that you were angry with me?

LETTY. (*Assumed flippancy*) You shouldn't think about me at all—(*Crossing to c.*)—but about your appetite! (*Light laugh*) If you're hungry—Miss Rice will be delighted to give you something to eat!

(*DICK turns and regards her in surprise.*)

DICK. And that's all you care! Just enough to kid me! You learned that from Madge! Madge is a villain!

LETTY. Indeed, she is not—she is a darling, and I love her!

DICK. Then you *can* love people—when you want to? (*Advancing a step to LETTY*)

LETTY. Yes—(*Stepping back of chair L. of C.*) I love Jim——

DICK. (*Quick and wrathful*) Who's Jim?

LETTY. Our old collie dog! (*DICK laughs*) And of course I love grandma and grandpa——

DICK. Have they sold the cottage? (*Looking at her keenly*)

LETTY. No—but there is a prospect—and the price is suprisingly high—I am sure it isn't worth it!

DICK. You leave that to the customer—if he wants to get stung!

LETTY. Grandma used to complain of loneliness; now, she says she doesn't miss me at all!

DICK. Of course not?

LETTY. (*In surprise*) How?

DICK. (*Firmly*) This is where you belong, and this is where you stay!

LETTY. I forgot—you said you were hungry—and I am detaining you!

DICK. Do you want to get rid of me?

LETTY. (*After brief pause*) You are free to do as you please. (*To L.*)

DICK. (*Taking prompt advantage of her reply*) Then I shall remain here! (*Crossing to table R. seating himself with determined air*)

(*GEORGE enters from C. D. with pitcher of water.*)

GEORGE. (Excuse me—here's that ice water! (*Advancing lazily down toward table R.*)

(*Enter immediately after GEORGE—PUNCH, arm-in-*

arm with ROSE and MAY—they come in in a rush.)

PUNCH. (*Loud*) Lookout—you're on the track!

(GEORGE quickly jumps aside to R.)

GEORGE. Laws! Mr. Punch!. I almost done drapped it. (*Placing pitcher on table R.*)

PUNCH. (*In comic irritation*) Where's the bunch? Where's our coach? Young, old boy, where are you? Business is business, and time flies. (*Taking his watch from his pocket and flipping it back again*) Has anybody here seen our director? (*Enter GRACE and MADGE from C., followed by ESTELLE—Enter YOUNG from L. with Minute book*) Hello, Young, old man! (*Quickly up to C. D. calling off*) Hay—come in everybody—schools took up!

(YOUNG crossing to table R. where he stands at head of table. GRACE, MAY and ROSE are in a group near the piano—chatting. LETTY alone on the L. DICK alone on the R. GEORGE well up-stage R. ESTELLE at R. of table R.)

YOUNG. Before we call this meeting to order—(*Enter all the students in a noisy rush. All talking and laughing as they work to various positions in pairs and trios. Using gavel*) Young ladies—(*They talk louder*) Young ladies—ladies——!

PUNCH. (*Loud*) There are no ladies present? (*They all stop at once and glare at PUNCH*) Do my eyes deceive me! (*Using his fingers as a monocle*)

GRACE. (*To PUNCH*) Don't get fresh until you run with the Seniors!

(DICK jerks PUNCH by the coat, which draws him back to R. NOTE:—for this situation, leave

the principals in the foreground, and group all the others to the back. During this shifting to positions, GEORGE goes quietly out C. D.)

YOUNG. Fellow students—this meeting is for the purpose of nominating and electing new members to our distinguished Dramatic Association—an organization that has covered itself with glory!

OMNES. (*Loud*) Hear! hear! (*All applaud*)

YOUNG. We expect to undertake a more ambitious effort than we have thus far attempted—in the presentation of our play, this year. And to do this, we must have the best talent the class is able to supply. I am sure you agree with me?

OMNES. (*Loud*) Yes! Yes!

PUNCH. Me does!

(They all look at PUNCH in disapproval.)

YOUNG. (*Gaining in interest*) The drama is a great art! Pent up in our hearts each one of us has the fire of genius—it needs only to be encouraged to burst forth and shed its brilliance upon a waiting world!

PUNCH. Watchful waiting!

OMNES. (*Loud approval*) Hear—hear!

PUNCH. (*Turning to YOUNG*) Young, old boy—drama is all right, but me—for vaudeville! That's the stuff! (*Executing a step or two*)

ESTELLE. (*Sharply*) Punch, shut up!

PUNCH. Thanks—you're a lady—I hate to admit it, but you really are! (*Ironical bow*)

YOUNG. What I mean to convey is that we must admit scholars who are qualified by birth, education—talent and character, to become members of our organization—who will bring credit upon us, and upon themselves.

PUNCH. Cut it; Deacon—let's get down to voting—I love to vote!

YOUNG. Presently Punch, all in good time. Before we come to that, I feel it my duty to bring to your attention, a matter of importance—a very serious matter! (*They all show interest*) Our friend Richard, here—(*Indicating DICK R.*)—has practically enjoined upon us, silence regarding the mysterious disappearance of the ring—an incident with which you are all familiar. But as I came through the hall just now, I found our beloved landlady, Miss Rice, greatly agitated and in tears!

(*All display surprise and concern.*)

PUNCH. What's the trouble with Ricey?

YOUNG. I informed her that it is due all of us that she repeat the story she has just told me—she has reluctantly consented to come here. (*Stepping to c. d. and speaking off*) Miss Rice, will you kindly step in? (*To students*) I have one request to make of you—control your feelings—no matter what occurs, suppress your feelings.

(*Enter MISS RICE from c. d.—they all make room for her,—she is wiping her eyes and appears very nervous.*)

MISS RICE. Oh, Mr. Young, why did you tell them?—I'm so sorry.

(*YOUNG places a chair forward to position c. for her.*)

YOUNG. It is your duty Miss Rice—come—(*She drops into the chair, in great distress*) We are often called upon to perform unpleasant tasks—and we must not shirk!

MISS RICE. It is very dreadful, Mr. Young—(*Tearfully*) Very——

YOUNG. It is indeed—but we are all friends—
(*Looking about*)

MADGE. (*Impatiently*) For heaven's sake!
what is it all about?

MISS RICE. It is about my emerald set, Miss
Stevens—you all remember the brooch—and the
earrings? I wore them last Commencement Day—
and you all admired them!

GIRLS. Yes——

MISS RICE. In comparison with modern pieces of
jewelry, they may have no great value—but they
were priceless to me—because they once belonged to
my mother who has been dead many years!

MADGE. What has happened to the emeralds?

MISS RICE. They were in a little jewel-case in
my room.

MADGE. Yes?

MISS RICE. The box is gone!

OMNES. (*Great surprise*) Gone!

MISS RICE. Gone! (*Unable to control her
emotion, she bows her head, weeping.* MADGE drops
to one knee beside MISS RICE)

MADGE. Don't cry so—dear, Miss Rice—(*Taking
her hand sympathetically*) Perhaps you only mis-
laid them?

MISS RICE. (*Shaking her head sadly*) No—
they were quite safe last night—and now—(*Shaking
her head*)—the box is gone!

MADGE. Was the drawer locked?

MISS RICE. No—it was careless of me—but
nothing has ever disappeared in my house before.

ESTELLE. I lost a bracelet last week!

GRACE. (*Amazed*) 'Stell!

MADGE. (*Rising—to ESTELLE*) You said noth-
ing about it?

ESTELLE. No—I felt as Dick did—I couldn't
accuse anyone——

MISS RICE. (*Nervously*) I do not accuse any-

one—I beg of you, my dear young friends, don't think that!

MADGE. The articles have disappeared—someone must have taken them—they couldn't walk off? (*To others, hopelessly*) What shall we do?

GRACE. We ought to hire a detective!

PUNCH. Hire me!

ESTELLE. Punch! You're ridiculous!

PUNCH. Not at all—there is imbedded here—(*Tapping his forehead*)—a subtle penetration that they suspect!

MADGE. This is no joke—it is a very grave matter.

PUNCH. I never was more serious in all my short and stormy life! It may develop into a great sensation—like one of those romances of Poe's——

MADGE. Suppose you should discover the—the guilty person—would you have the courage to denounce—that person?

PUNCH. I would if it was—my own sister!

ESTELLE. (*Indignantly*) Punch! How dare you!

MAY. Don't say anything so horrid—it makes me dizzy!

(*MISS RICE rises; YOUNG moves the chair back to former position at table R. DICK has remained R., quiet and thoughtful. LETTY L., interested.*)

MISS RICE. It is most disturbing, and my poor headaches distractingly! (*Her hand to her head. Two of the girls take her by each arm and in sympathetic manner, lead her up C.*)

MADGE. Go lie down for a rest—dear old Ricey—it's perfectly scandalous!

PUNCH. Leave it to me—I'm the boy for the job!

MADGE. (*Severe*) It's about time for you to make good at something!

PUNCH. I'm going to be a great detective—something that father will be proud of—and mother won't recognize! Watch me! After this meeting, I want everybody to come to my room while I put them through the third degree—yes, and the fourth and fifth degree, if necessary—when I get through with you—the examination will make the Spanish Inquisition look like a tango tea!

MADGE. Punch, if you really succeed, I—I'll marry you!

PUNCH. (*Delighted and astonished*) No! You don't mean it!

MADGE. I do—you haven't asked me—I suppose you're too bashful—but I know you love me—so that goes! (*Extending her hand*)

(*All laugh, crowding about PUNCH and MADGE laughing.*)

YOUNG. (*Rapping with gavel*) Order!

(*The noise subsides.*)

ESTELLE. (*Down R. of DICK*) Dick; are you going to let Punch make a fool of himself?

DICK. Yes—I'm going to encourage him! Punch, you're a noble Roman!

PUNCH. Aye, aye, Senator!

DICK. (*Advancing*) I'm going to help by offering a reward of five hundred dollars if you catch—the thief!

OMNES. (*Loud*) Hear! Hear! (*Applause*)

YOUNG. (*Rapping*) Order!

MADGE. Come to business—where is the Committee on Plays?

ROSE. (*Stepping forward*) Here it is! Come on, Grace! (*She beckons GRACE who joins her*)

MADGE. Are you ready to announce your choice of plays?

GRACE and ROSE. We are—but we're afraid to!

PUNCH. It must be something of Bernhardt's or I won't act!

MADGE. (*To PUNCH, witheringly*) There are no detectives in Bernhardt's plays.

PUNCH. (*Cherfully*) All right—then let's have minstrels!

YOUNG. Ladies and gentlemen——

PUNCH. Present!

YOUNG. The selection of members comes first in the order of business.

OMNES. Yes—hear—hear!

YOUNG. There are several names to be voted upon—(*Consulting his book*)

MADGE. My candidate comes first—here she is! (*Taking LETTY's hand, leading her forward—she rather reluctant*)

LETTY. After hearing the qualifications Mr. Young set forth, I feel poorly equipped for dramatic work—although I love it!

MADGE. Of course you do—we all know you recite beautifully—you're going to be our leading lady!

(*All look surprised.*)

MAY. I thought Estelle—(*Looking at ESTELLE*)

ESTELLE. (*Rigidly*) It seems Miss Stevens has arranged for my successor!

YOUNG. Before Miss Willis can be allotted to any position, she must be elected to membership.

OMNES. Yes, of course—of course!

DICK. Will someone make the nomination?

MADGE. I propose the name of Letty Willis!

DICK. (*Promptly*) Second the motion!

PUNCH. Are you ready for the question?

ESTELLE. No, we are not!

YOUNG. Qualifications must first be passed upon.

MADGE. (*Indignantly*) I never heard anything more insulting!

YOUNG. (*Rather severe tone*) We must follow the by-laws, Miss Stevens——

MADGE. Go ahead with your old by-laws!

YOUNG. (*Reading from book of Minutes*) The first qualification relates to the birth of the candidate.

(*All looking at LETTY.*)

LETTY. (*With quiet dignity*) I am an American girl; born of American parents.

OMNES. (*Loud applause*) Hear! Hear!

YOUNG. Education?

PUNCH. She knows more than the whole bunch combined! (*LETTY smiles, the others laugh at PUNCH*) Am I right?—what next?

YOUNG. Talent!

PUNCH. She's chuck full of it—only waiting an opportunity to—what was that you said?—(*Quoting YOUNG*)—"burst forth and shed its brilliance upon—upon"—any old thing!

YOUNG. Fourth and last—*character!*

DICK. (*Surprise*) Character! I don't recall that in the by-laws!

YOUNG. It was carried at a meeting you failed to attend.

DICK. I consider it most offensive—that's my opinion,

YOUNG. (*To, DICK—sharp tone*) We haven't asked your opinion! (*The two men regard each other in displeasure*)

LETTY. (*A step forward*) Please don't quarrel on my account—(*To YOUNG*) What do you mean by 'character,' Mr. Young?

YOUNG. It means the candidate must show a perfectly clean record—no reprehensible conduct—or even suspicion against him, or her! (*Regarding LETTY steadily. All eyes on LETTY*)

DICK. (*A step forward to R. of C.*) Miss Willis

is above reproach! (*The others hesitate, and there is a somewhat uneasy movement on the part of all*)
Do you second me?

MADGE. I do, of course!

DICK. You are a partisan—I want to hear from all. (*Addressing all*)

ESTELLE. You see the feeling of the class!

DICK. What is the feeling about? (*Sternly*)
Has anyone the manhood, or the womanhood to speak out, honestly, frankly?

MAY. (*In reluctant, confused tone*) You know, Dick, all the gossip——

DICK. (*Sharp tone*) What gossip?

LETTY. I will tell you—I felt it coming—the old kindly feeling is gone—some of them scarcely speak to me—they stand in twos and threes, and when I pass, they turn away, or give me a cold glance of suspicion.

DICK. Suspicion of what?

LETTY. Someone has been talking to them—about me—poisoning them—it began the night your ring—was stolen!

DICK. (*Amazed and indignant*) You don't mean to say they dare accuse you?

LETTY. Not in words—but in their hearts, they do—(*To all*) It's true, isn't it? You all count me a nobody—a poor girl, struggling through college by fair means—or foul! When things disappear, you think I take them! Oh! (*Weeping*) You do! You do!

DICK. (*In anger*) If they do, they'll have to say so—right now! (*To all*) Friends, you hear what Miss Willis says—her name has been proposed and seconded—I call for the question—everyone in favor of her election, say aye!

MADGE, PUNCH and DICK. Aye!

DICK. (*To all*) Contrary minded?

OMNES. (*Loud and bitter*) No! (*All looking at LETTY in displeasure—she weeping*)

PUNCH. (*Astonished*) Black-balled!

(*LETTY sinks in chair L. weeping—MADGE appears about to advance to LETTY when ROSE and MAY restrain her—MADGE yielding to them.*)

DICK. (*Great indignation*) That's your vote, is it! I'm ashamed of you! Everyone of you! I am too much ashamed of you to remain a member of this Association—You can take my resignation—right here—and now! (*Goes to LETTY and takes her hand*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE:—*The Campus, or a view of the lawn in front of one of the College buildings. Rustic seat R. of C. down-stage. Rustic chair well over L.*

NOTE:—*If it is not convenient to show an exterior scene, the interior used in the earlier acts, may be continued, with the same arrangement of furniture.*

TIME:—*Evening, following a class dinner. Everybody in evening dress. PUNCH wears evening dress, with tennis shoes, and a soft shirt, and no tie.*

AT RISE:—*A "blind" chorus is stationed off-stage. They render a college song, concluding with a ballad chorus, as the curtain is raised, rather slowly. All the singers and principals march on from R., execute a drill, and march off.*

LETTY, MISS RICE *and* GEORGE, *are absent from this opening chorus.*

(*Enter from L. GEORGE WASHINGTON WATTS. He carries a collar in one hand, and a red or yellow tie in the other.*)

GEORGE. (*Pausing c.*) Laws! Ain't that singin' beau'ful! (*Looking after the singers*) I does cer'ly love singin'—'minds me o' home an' mother—(*Sniffing tearfully—comic effect*)—down in South Car'lina!

(*Enter from R. PUNCH, in a rush.*)

PUNCH. Hello, George, you're just the boy I'm looking for!

GEORGE. Is that so, Mr. Punch! (*Down L. a step, grinning*) I reckon that a kind o'—o'—co-incident!

PUNCH. What's that? (*Down R. eyeing GEORGE*) Where did you excavate that word?

GEORGE. That means a—a——

PUNCH. Co-incidence—spit it out! What are you doing with those tools? (*Indicating collar and tie*)

GEORGE. Excuse me, Mr. Punch—Miss Madge done tol'e me to fetch 'em fo' you to wear!

(*Enter MADGE from R. quickly.*)

PUNCH. (*Snatching articles from GEORGE*) Does she think she is going to dictate my attire?

MADGE. (*Down R.*) Yes, I am!

(PUNCH C. MADGE R. GEORGE *over* L.)

PUNCH. (*Turning sharply to MADGE*) Indeed! Will you let *me* boss *your* wardrobe?

MADGE. (*Indignantly*) I should say not! But

you look awful—(*Surveying him*)—coming to a party without a collar!

PUNCH. Miss Rice said I could!

MADGE. (*Stormily*) This isn't her party—she has nothing to do with it!

PUNCH. (*Quickly*) Yes, she has—she loaned us the paper napkins! (*Tossing the collar aside*) But I can go if I'm de trop! (*Drawing the tie about his neck with a vicious tug*)

GEORGE. (*In alarm*) You're hangin' yourself—Mr. Punch—you'll get stranleated!

PUNCH. Who cares! (*Giving the tie a vicious tug*)—what—becomes—of—me!

MADGE. Why *are* you so careless?

PUNCH. All geniuseses are carlesseses—

MADGE. Haven't you any decent clothes?

PUNCH. Clothes! I have clothes that are pining away for want of exercise!

MADGE. You better learn how to dress before you attend another dinner! (*Down R. a step*) You didn't know how to dress in September, October, November. Now this is May, and look at you! You're a sight!

PUNCH. If I ever attend another food massacre, it will take place in a pasture, and I'll get a permit to appear without a bib!

GEORGE. Excuse me—excuse me—(*Taking letter from his pocket*) A letter jes' now comed—kind o' important I reckon—with a speciality stamp—

PUNCH. For me?

GEORGE. Fo' Mis' Willis—I didn't see her nowhere's 'bout.

MADGE. I'll take it—(*Crossing to GEORGE, taking letter. PUNCH comes down R.*) Go find Miss Willis—tell her there is a message for her—and if she wants it, she must come here for it. And *hurry*!

GEORGE. Yes'm—I'se a hurryin'—I'se a hurryin'! (*Exit L. in usual lazy fashion*)

MADGE. (*Regarding letter*) From Schenectady.

PUNCH. Perhaps somebody's sick!

MADGE. Letty acts perfectly awful—she wouldn't come one step to the party.

PUNCH. Who would with the crowd snubbing her?

MADGE. (*Seriously*) Punch, have you discovered anything? You never say a word about your detective work! (*Advancing down to seat R. where she sits, presently*)

PUNCH. That shows I'm a good detective—know how to keep my trap closed!

MADGE. But you can tell *me*!

PUNCH. Yes—then *you* can tell everybody!

MADGE. I can keep a secret.

PUNCH. I can keep it better. (*Dropping on seat beside MADGE*)

MADGE. (*Great interest*) Then you *have* learned something—

PUNCH. I have learned to shut up!

MADGE. Ah—tell me! (*Pouting*)

PUNCH. Not a nibble!

MADGE. (*Sharp*) You *must* tell me!

PUNCH. Now don't nag! I can see we are going to be hideously happy—after the ceremony!

MADGE. (*Rising*) Perhaps there won't be any ceremony.

PUNCH. (*Haughty indifference*) It may be just as well!

MADGE. (c.) Do you want to break our engagement?

PUNCH. (*Stormily*) I could break anything! (*Rising*)

MADGE. (*Tearfully*) Oh, Punch, forgive me—it's all my fault!

PUNCH. (*Assuming injured air*) Of course it is—I could have told you that all along.

MADGE. (*Tearfully*) Forgive me! (*Advancing, laying her hand on his arm*)

PUNCH. Don't tease the animals! (*Brushing her hand away*)

MADGE. (*A wail of anguish*) Oh, Punchy—I'm sorry—forgive me!

PUNCH. Don't howl—people will think some brute is murdering you!

MADGE. (*In comic agitation*) Oh, Punchy—Punchy!

PUNCH. Oh, Madgie, Madgie! (*The two weep on each other's shoulders*) Say you forgive me!

MADGE. I say it! Say you forgive me!

PUNCH. I say it—with all my heart! (*Embrace*)

(*Enter LETTY from L. She pauses abruptly on observing MADGE and PUNCH in embrace.*)

LETTY. I beg your pardon.

PUNCH. You needn't—come right in—Madge, look up and execute a blissful smile! (*Raising MADGE's face by the chin—MADGE smiling*)

LETTY. I am glad you are so happy!

PUNCH. That's why I love a fight—it's so pleasant making up! (*Waltzing MADGE about a step or two*)

LETTY. George told me you had a message for me.

MADGE. Better still—a letter from home! (*Extending the letter to LETTY*)

LETTY. (*Taking it eagerly*) Special delivery! (*Looking at it apprehensively*) I wonder if anything has happened? (*Crossing to bench R.*)

PUNCH. Something tells me it's good news!

LETTY. (*Looking at him in surprise*) What makes you think so? (*Sitting on bench R. c.*)

PUNCH. I'm a detective—(*With pride*)—It is part of the science of my business to know the contents of letters—before they are written!

(*LETTY seated R., nervously opens the letter.*)

MADGE. We'll catch you if it's anything fainty!

(Enter DICK from up L. As he observes the situation, he remains in the background, unheard and unseen, he watches the scene. MADGE and PUNCH C.—MADGE with her arm about PUNCH's neck, both watching LETTY with interest.)

LETTY. (*Reading letter*) "Dearest Letty:—Grandma wanted to wait until to-morrow, but I told her we must let you hear the good news as soon as possible—so, I am writing by lamplight, and will take this down to the post-office myself. What do you think, Letty, dear? We know how happy and thankful you will be when we tell you we have sold the farm for three thousand dollars!" (*In great surprise*) Three thousand dollars! (*Continuing to read*) "It seems like a great fortune to us, and far more than the old place is worth. But that is not all—the customer is like a good angel—he says he does not want the place for five years, during which time we are to occupy it, free of expense." (*LETTY rises in growing amazement*) "He further states that he will make repairs at no cost to us. I can scarcely believe it, dear child; the money is lying before me—still, I cannot realize it. The only name our friend has given us, is Mr. Smith." (*In great delight*) Oh! Grandma and grandpa won't have to work any more—! And I won't be a burden to them! Oh, Madge! Madge! Think of it! Isn't it glorious!

(*Weeping with joy, MADGE runs to her, embracing her.*)

PUNCH. Didn't I tell you it was good news?

LETTY. If I could only thank—Mr. Smith!

PUNCH. Perhaps you can—some day! (*Looking*

around, he observes DICK) Hello, Dick—come and join our little band!

DICK. (*Advancing*) I didn't mean to listen, but——

MADGE. (*To DICK*) Isn't it splendid news?

DICK. (*Down L.*) I am sure Miss Willis is worthy all the good fortune that fate can bestow upon her.

MADGE. Now that worry is laid, what will you do next?

LETTY. First I shall write to grandma and grandpa—and tell them how grateful I am to our generous benefactor—(*Abruptly*)—I wonder what he looks like?

MADGE. (*With enthusiasm*) Perhaps he is young and handsome—like a fairy prince, and you will marry him, and live happy ever after!

(DICK looks at LETTY, keen glance—she not observing him.)

LETTY. (*Dolefully*) I shall never marry.

PUNCH. Tut-tut——!

MADGE. Pooh-pooh!

LETTY. At least not until I am very old—and then no one will want me.

PUNCH. I used to talk like that when I was young and foolish! That reminds me—(*Taking MADGE by the arm*)—I haven't had enough ice-cream—come along, Madge—(*Drawing her quickly up to R.*) Us for the ice-cream freezer!

(*Exit MADGE and PUNCH quickly R. U.*)

LETTY. (*To PUNCH and MADGE—nervously*) Please take me with you—(*A step up-stage*)

DICK. (*Intercepting her*) You are running away from me——

LETTY. Indeed you are mistaken—(*Nervously*)

DICK. I am not mistaken, Letty. (*Down to her*) You have been avoiding me—deliberately—it hurts me more than I can tell you——

LETTY. You are quite—quite wrong, Mr. Bradley—(*A step to R.*)

DICK. “Mr. Bradley”—you see—you *are* offended—tell me what I have done—let me ask your forgiveness, and make any atonement in my power!

LETTY. (*In confusion*) There is really nothing—you have always been most kind, and—if you will excuse me—(*Attempting to pass him*)

DICK. No—you shall not run away this time—(*Taking both her hands*)—not until we understand each other, Letty——

LETTY. Please let me go—you know what I told you——

DICK. (*Recklessly—but earnestly*) I don’t care what you told me—I tell you that you are the sweetest, dearest girl in the whole world, and I love you with all my heart!

LETTY. (*In great distress*) Oh! You must not talk like that!

DICK. I *will* talk like that—I mean it—more than that—I ask for your love in return.

LETTY. I will not listen to you—I cannot! (*Drawing away, succeeding in freeing one hand*)

DICK. (*Retaining one hand*) Why not? You don’t mean to say you don’t care—(*Holding her left hand with his left hand, while he places his R. arm lightly about her shoulders*)

LETTY. (*Almost in tears*) I cannot answer you—it’s not fair of you——

DICK. (*Picking her up quickly*) Not fair! Do you think it was fair to encourage me to love you—and then almost refuse to look at me—without giving me some reason——

LETTY. (*Same manner*) There is no reason——

DICK. (*Quickly*) No reason——?

LETTY. Except—I am acting, as I feel!

(DICK *instantly drops her hand, releasing her.*)

DICK. (*In a tone indicating he is deeply hurt*) Does that mean that you—you are through with me?—that I am out of your life—forever?

LETTY. (*In agitation*) We can be friends——

DICK. (*Firmly*) No—we cannot be friends—we must be more than friends—I know I'm not—one, two, three, good enough for you, but——

LETTY. (*Facing him, quickly*) Don't say that—please don't—you've been so kind—you have defended me—(*Her voice breaking in emotion*)

DICK. Let me defend you for life—(*Taking one hand*) Let me go to your grandparents and ask them to give you to me in the holy bonds of matrimony!

LETTY. I can't let you do that—it is impossible! (*DICK again drops her hand, looking at her in surprise. Tearfully*) Please—please let me go—(*Crossing a step up c.*)

DICK. One moment—(*A step to R. turning to her*) I know I have no right to ask—but will you tell me this—is there—someone else? Is that—the obstacle?

LETTY. (*Facing him, firm tone of dignity*) The obstacle is—my poverty, and your wealth—your position, compared to mine——

DICK. (*Great surprise*) What! Why I never appreciated the old money until I began to plan all the happiness it might bring you—if you object to the money—we can get rid of that! (*Smiling cheerily*)

LETTY. That's not all—(*The smile vanishes from DICK's face*) Every student in the class thinks I am—a thief!

DICK. (*Sharp tone*) Letty—don't say that——

LETTY. You know how they feel——

DICK. (*Angry impatience*) What do I care how they feel—that for the whole bunch! (*Snapping his fingers*) Are they more to you than I am?

LETTY. My good name is everything to me—your ring has never been found—(*Tearfully*)—they think—I took it!

DICK. They don't think that—I know some of them act like old Nick—but it is due to the spiteful activity of one person——

LETTY. Estelle!

DICK. (*A step nearer LETTY*) Are you going to allow one jealous woman to make us miserable forever?

LETTY. (*Slowly, tearfully*) I am not going to bring humiliation to you—(*Crossing slowly to L., her emotion increasing*) I will not let you throw your life away upon a poor girl, who is suspected of stealing, from her friends! (*Weeping bitterly, she exits L. slowly—DICK C. looking after her*)

(*DICK remains irresolute for a second, then pulls himself together with determined air.*)

DICK. I won't stand for this—not on your life—something's got to be done—(*Turning sharply toward R.*)

(*Enter from R. PUNCH, quickly.*)

PUNCH. Dick old boy—rescue a drowning man! (*Advancing quickly to DICK*) Madge has an awful capacity for that brutalizing ice-cream—have you got thirty cents!

DICK. I've got more than thirty cents! (*His hand on PUNCH's shoulder*)

PUNCH. Let me have it! (*Quickly extending his hand*)

DICK. (*Regarding him critically*) Punch, I wonder if you could—in a crisis—measure up to something big—a man's job!

PUNCH. What are you driving at? Do you think I'm a coward?

DICK. No, I don't—I think there is a lot of good in you—if we can only stir it up!

PUNCH. Go ahead and stir! (*Both advance down-stage*)

DICK. The happiness of my life is at stake—you can save me—and, at the same time, cover yourself with heroic glory!

PUNCH. I never hankered for glory—(*A step to R., hands in his pockets*) But if there is any lying around going to waste—(*Turning to DICK*)

DICK. (*Sternly*) See here—Letty won't look at me because of the gossip that has been on the wag since that confounded ring affair—you said you had the brains and the ambition to discover who took it.

PUNCH. (*Non-committal tone*) I have discovered!

DICK. (*Amazed*) You have!

PUNCH. Yes, and the emeralds, too.

DICK. Punch, you don't mean it?

PUNCH. I do mean it.

DICK. (*Delighted*) You're a wonder—a dandy! (*Slapping him on the back*) I always said there was something there. (*Tapping PUNCH on head*)

PUNCH. Yes—you once called it a cabbage—(*Looking at DICK with an air of injury*) I haven't forgotten that!

DICK. Now, don't be vindictive—don't exult over another man's misery—Now that you have discovered the culprit—that will clear Letty's name.

PUNCH. Perhaps.

DICK. Of course it will—you'll tell—it's your duty!

PUNCH. Think so?

DICK. Certainly—common justice to that heart-broken girl——

PUNCH. (*A tone of seriousness*) You're putting something pretty tough up to me, old pal——

DICK. All right—then here is where the hero business comes in—(*Enthusiastically*) You take the blame! You confess that you took the brooch and earrings!

PUNCH. (*In disgust*) Now what do I want with green earrings! Do you think I'm a Zoolah, or a Fijii Islander!

DICK. Perhaps not—but my happiness is at stake—and Letty won't listen to me—(*Abruptly*)—what's the use of talking about it—somebody *must* confess—and I'd rather see you do it than anybody else! What do you say?

PUNCH. What *can* I say since you have selected me as the victim!

DICK. (*Quick*) That's it—you can play the martyr—you're the very image of an ancient martyr—(*Excitedly*) We'll call the others, and get the ghastly thing over! (*Quickly up c.*)

(*Enter MADGE quickly from R.—indignantly.*)

MADGE. Punchy Doolittle!

DICK. (*Calling off R.*) Come on boys—come on girls—something doing! (*All the principals and students rush in from R.—everybody except LETTY and MISS RICÉ. ESTELLE down to seat R. C. MADGE down R. of C. PUNCH C. DICK down to L. of C.*) Fellow students, look at this ingrate—this monster! (*Glaring at PUNCH*) Down on your knees, wretched fellow! (*PUNCH drops heavily to his knees, assuming comic expression and attitude of remorse and woe*)

MADGE. (*Astonished and indignant*) Dick Bradley! What's the matter with you?

DICK. (*Same excited manner*) Miss Willis—(*Calling off L.*) Miss Willis—(*To crowd*) Will someone ask Miss Willis to come here?

MADGE. Tell her Dick has gone violently mad!

(Exit GRACE, quickly, L.)

DICK. You see this pitiable object? *(Indicating PUNCH)*

MADGE. Punch, are you crazy?

PUNCH. I don't know—do you?

MADGE. Dick, for goodness' sake! What does it mean?

DICK. *(Assuming great indignation)* Mean! It means that this creature—*(PUNCH winces sharply)* This schemer! *(PUNCH jerks sharply at each word)* This gaunt, flippant, audacious, daring adventurer—has worked his way into our confidence, only to betray us!

(All murmur and regard PUNCH in wonder and indignation—Enter from L. GRACE, with LETTY, remaining L.)

ROSE. What has he done?

DICK. Done! Let him tell it in his own base words! What have you done?

PUNCH. Nothing!

DICK. Confess!

PUNCH. Ladies and gentlemen, I confess!

MADGE. What do you confess?

PUNCH. I forget!

DICK. *(Quick and sharp)* What! Have you forgotten your infamy!

PUNCH. I don't wear any.

DICK. Coward!

PUNCH. Ah! Now you sting me to retort! I may be a scoundrel, but I am no coward! *(Rising, assuming heroic attitude)* I throw myself upon your mercy—it was me that *done* it!

MADGE. *Done* is bad enough, but what was it?

PUNCH. Behold, the fatal jewels! *(Drawing*

the jewel-casket with emeralds from his pocket)
In this little box are the emeralds poor Miss Rice was so grieved about!

(NOTE:—*The box is not opened—no emeralds shown.*)

MADGE. (*Aghast*) You don't mean to say——

PUNCH. Yes, I do—guilty, your honor! (*Extending the box to MADGE*)

MADGE. Oh, Punch! What a disgrace! (*Taking box—her head bowed—all the others regard PUNCH indignantly. DICK L., delighted—LETTY watching, puzzled—ESTELLE immovable, watching PUNCH*)

PUNCH. (*Cheerily*) Not a bit—it was all a joke!

OMNES. (*Indignation*) A joke!

PUNCH. Sure—wasn't it funny?—ha, ha! (*Mirthless laugh*)

YOUNG. (*To PUNCH, sternly*) You have peculiar ideas of jokes!

PUNCH. (*Cheerfully*) Haven't I—I'm scandalously original! (*To all*) You may now amuse yourselves by restoring it to our dear, Miss Rice!

(*All talking, led by MADGE, with box—rush off L. U. Remaining on the scene—PUNCH, DICK, LETTY, and ESTELLE.*)

PUNCH. (*To DICK*) Am I a hero?

DICK. You are—(*Grasping his hand warmly*)
I am your debtor for life!

PUNCH. (*To LETTY*) What does Miss Willis say——?

DICK. (*To LETTY*) Are you satisfied, Letty?

LETTY. (*Advancing to c.*) How can I feel satisfied, when I know you—(*PUNCH*)—are not playing fair? (*All look at her in surprise*) It was

good of you—a generous act, prompted by someone in my behalf. But I know better—it was not you who took the ring, nor the emeralds.

PUNCH. (*Seriously—R. of C.*) This farce has gone far enough.

DICK. (*L. of C. in surprise*) What do you mean by “farce?”

PUNCH. I’ll tell you—(*Looking at ESTELLE*)

ESTELLE. (*Quickly*) You will have to excuse me—(*Starting quickly up-stage*)

PUNCH. (*Quick*) No, we won’t—stop here a moment!

ESTELLE. I don’t care to listen to your nonsense!

PUNCH. (*Seriously*) You won’t find it nonsense, Cis! It’s dead serious! (*ESTELLE pauses apprehensively*) You’ve played for a big prize, and lost! You can’t win anything in this world by jealousy, and dishonesty—there stands the girl Dick loves—(*He indicates LETTY, who bows her head. To DICK*) Am I right, Dick?

DICK. That’s God’s truth! (*Looking at LETTY*)

PUNCH. You’ve played against yourself, Stella, old girl—now the only decent thing for you to do, is, tell the truth! (*Drawing the jewel-box with ring, from his pocket*) Dick, here is your ring! (*Looking at ESTELLE*)—I found it in—Estelle’s room!

(*LETTY and DICK manifest great surprise.*)

PUNCH. (*To ESTELLE*) Will you explain how it came there?

ESTELLE. (*Recklessly—bitterly*) Oh, what do I care! Since you have plotted to humiliate me—!

PUNCH. I know you of old—I had a mighty good idea where to look for this! (*Tapping the jewel-box*) You needn’t think this is a pleasure to me—I’m ashamed—but it’s justice, and we’re going

through with it—I hope it is a lesson! What do you say? (*Holding up the ring*)

ESTELLE. (*Hard, bitter tone*) I took it—and the emeralds!

PUNCH. To cast suspicion upon Letty?

ESTELLE. (*Defiantly*) Yes! Yes! I suppose you will all hate me—and tell everybody—I don't care anything about any of you—(*Bursting into hysterical weeping*)

DICK. Poor old pal—(*Crossing to ESTELLE*) Estelle—(*Taking her hand. Gently*) Won't you speak to me?

ESTELLE. (*Tearfully, with bowed head*) Dick—what can I say—to you!

DICK. Not a word—we're the same friends we always were—this is our secret, locked in our hearts—forever! (*PUNCH hands the jewel-case to DICK*) I want you to accept this—from me?

ESTELLE. I can't—

DICK. You must. (*Placing the ring in the hand he holds*) You won it—you know.

LETTY. Take it—it will please—Dick.

ESTELLE. (*Tearfully*) If you wish it! (*Taking the ring, she sinks on bench R. C. endeavoring to regain composure*)

DICK. Punch—you're all to the good. (*Shaking his hand, while LETTY takes the other hand*)

LETTY. How can we ever thank you?

PUNCH. That reminds me—I'm bursting to tell something I promised not to—(*To LETTY*) You want to know who Mr. Smith is?

DICK. (*Quickly—warningly*) Punch—if you dare—!

PUNCH. I dare! (*Loud, exultant tone*) Mr. Smith is Dick's agent! Ha, ha! Now, I'm square for that confession! (*Brushing the dust from the knees of his trousers*)

LETTY. Dick! Then we owe our good fortune to you!

(Enter MISS RICE and MADGE, MISS RICE with emerald-box—all the others crowding after her.)

MISS RICE. Oh, Mr. Doolittle! I am so delighted!

GRACE. (To LETTY) Will you forgive us for acting such beasts?

(LETTY embraces GRACE.)

DICK. Yes—we'll forgive you—(Taking LETTY by the hand)—that is, if you'll promise to dance at our wedding! This New co-ed, is the future, Mrs. Richard Bradley?

(All talking and laugh, congratulating LETTY and DICK—in noisy fashion. A singing number may end the play, if desired.)

CURTAIN.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 602 791 7